

**Dear Reader,**

**May He who has prompted the writing of this book grant you the leisure, the inclination and the patience to read it carefully and enable you to obtain peace, tranquillity and happiness even in this world of strife, sickness and death.**

**Yours faithfully,  
The Author.**

# SCIENCE AND GEETA

BY

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Namo'stu te Vyasa vishalabuddhe  
Fullaravindayata-p a d m a n e t r a  
Yena twaya Bharatatailapurnah  
Prajwalito jnanamayah pradeepa.



## NOTICE

**O**NLY 250 copies of this book have been printed. So long as the supply lasts, free copies will be supplied on request to members of scientific or religious societies, associations or other organizations, who apply through their secretaries.

The people who are likely to benefit from a perusal of this book are the well-educated, posted up-to-date in modern knowledge, who through adverse circumstances have lost their peace of mind without actually being in physical want.

The author does not expect to be made to bear the cost of transit.

15-A, Shyamananda Road, }  
CALCUTTA, }  
24-11-'39.

T. N. ROY.





## *AHUTI*

Will HE  
to whom all sacrifices are offered  
accept this,  
offered on behalf of all  
who suffer failing to realize  
HIM  
WHO can make  
a mute an orator,  
a paralytic a mountaineer,  
and realizing WHOM  
we can have  
peace, tranquillity and happiness  
even in this world of  
strife, sickness and death?



## PREFACE

THE recent thorough overhauling of science has removed the conflict between it and religion. Attempts have also been made to combine religion with science. All thoughtful men are against such combination for the reason that the best interests of both would be served by keeping them separate. The hostility between the two was initially due to a boundary dispute. Each encroached on the domain of the other. The difficulty of keeping them separate was due to the difficulty of defining mind and matter successfully. This difficulty has now been removed and with it the stumbling-block to the ideation of God. As a result of modern scientific discoveries, impossible concepts have now become possible. Einstein has unwittingly contributed largely to the solution of the problem. He has, like Columbus, stumbled on a truth which he never set out to discover.

For all that the sciences dealing with physical energy have done and are likely to do in future, let us not overlook their limitations and drawbacks. All physical energy must run down inspite of the law of conservation of energy. It is always taking us towards death or extinction. But there is another kind of energy which does not run down but runs up, which preserves us and makes us immortal. These two kinds of energies together set up the convection currents which are the romances of

life. The Geeta deals with both these kinds of energies and tells us of the reservoir from which both flow.

The Geeta still eludes all attempts to translate it successfully in any other language than its own. Every attempt to do it has met with only partial success and mine has only shared the general fate though I had the advantage of the pioneers in the field. Too literal translations are unreadable for the average reader and too free ones are not the text but the translator's own interpretations. I have tried to avoid the extremes, and in this I have received the most patient and ungrudging help from a great man, the Saint of Baidyanath, little known to the outside world but known to the inner circle as the 'Hidden Treasure'. He is unwilling to expose himself to the public gaze. He, however, should not be made responsible for the thesis put forward in this book.

I am also greatly indebted to Swami Pratyagatmananda and to Prof. Nalini Kanta Brahma of the Presidency College, Calcutta, for the invaluable help that they rendered to me in suggesting a great many additions and alterations. For the corrections of the proofs, I am indebted to Mr. A. K. Pathak, M.A., B.L.

CALCUTTA, }  
November 24, 1939. }

T. N. ROY.

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BY THE SAME AUTHOR

**1. Science on *Cast* Distinctions and Marriage-Regulations.**

The Right Hon'ble the Earl of Ronaldshay, now Marquess of Zetland, wrote:—

“You have raised a most important question in a very interesting form—one which demands the thoughtful consideration of all who are interested in the future welfare of the human race.”

**2. The Philosophy, Science and Practice of the Curative Arts.**

The Marquess of Zetland wrote:—

“I see from the Preface of the book that you were in some doubt as to whether you should include Chapter I of Part II. I do not think you need have hesitated to include it. Indeed I can well believe that there will be some readers who will find it the most interesting chapter of the book.

..... But you have certainly demolished the ground on which the average supporter of allopathy might have based his doubts of the effectiveness of homeopathy.”

# ERRATA

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PAGE	LINE	READ	FOR
10	25	universe simultaneously,	universe, simultaneously
15	15	God.	God,
22	26	constitute as	constitute
49	20	last	lasts
50	13	Madhusudana	Madhusudhana
59	13	The Holy One spoke :	Nil
92	21	control	contro
93	27	29	9
102	20	pleases	pleasee
114	25	been	becn
131	18	world <sup>29</sup>	world <sup>9</sup>
<del>145</del>	<del>26</del>	<del>Swetaswara</del>	<del>Swetaswatara</del>
146	31	Spiritualists	Spititualists
190	23	He	he



# SCIENCE AND GEETA

## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

NOT long ago, an Indian gentleman with an international reputation, while visiting England, was asked the question: "Can you tell us why in spite of our much-vaunted civilization and advancement in science, we are not happier but rather the reverse?" The questioner evidently believed that progress in civilization and science should have enhanced man's happiness but was disappointed to find that it did not. He possibly also believed that mystic India held a secret about happiness which the material West missed. India, it would appear, did succeed in discovering a kind of happiness that did not depend on so-called civilization or science. That happiness depended on reducing the material needs of the body to the minimum and training the mind so as to make it an organ through which the universal mind might act. People who could reach such dizzy heights affirmed that once you had had a foretaste of such happiness, all worldly happiness would forthwith cease to appeal to you. They said that you could never know true freedom till the mind was freed from the tyranny of matter. Western philosophers have not denied the possibility of the mind gaining such an

ascendancy over matter, though they have denied that such a state could be reached by all or maintained indefinitely by any, so that such happiness was just as shortlived as the happiness that depended on material prosperity alone. The problem has been to combine the goodness of both without the badness of either, that is, to emancipate the mind from the bondage of the body without actually renouncing the world.

In a little poem of 700 couplets, properly called *Shreemat Bhagavat Geeta*, but shortened as *Geeta*, the attempt was made to solve the problem some 2,500 years ago. Judging by the popularity of the poem, it would seem that the attempt was eminently successful. During its long existence, it has had a galaxy of noted annotators, commentators and reviewers in India. Perhaps no other book has been read oftener, or published oftener. It was not known to the outside world previous to 1785 when it was first published in English. Its translation in French was published in 1787, in Latin in 1823 and in Greek in 1846. Since then there have been other translations. A Christian author has found resemblances between the *Geeta* and the *Bible* in a hundred places.\* Another Christian author has been obliged to admire it very unwillingly. He says: ". . . . in this, at least, there is no fanaticism . . . . this is, at least, a sensible and religious doctrine . . . . and would that in the present selfish age, and this Northern active clime, it

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\* See *Geeta Rahasya* by B. G. Tilak.

could be applied and successfully carried out by Christians, as we call ourselves! It is the teaching of our Saviour when He bids us hate father and mother, and take up the cross . . . . we, too, should have our final emancipation, our salvation ever as our only desire . . . . we, too, should do our duty in this world without self-interest and attachment, and morally renounce the world. The great outcry against this doctrine is that it is unnatural. Nature bids us take an interest in the world. Nature fills us with emulation and ambition. It is natural to love advancement, prosperity, increase of wealth. It is natural to depend on ourselves alone, and not to put much faith in the promises of God, who will not help us, if we do not help ourselves. All this, it is true, is natural. But it is natural to sin, and very unnatural to act uprightly; and the want of nature is no ground for accusation of our doctrines."\*

Some have considered the *Geeta* as a "cathartic", as the psycho-analyst calls it, or a "healthful purging", as Aristotle calls it. To many a soul, maddened by grief, due to loss of property, relations or position, it has been a celestial balm, the suggestions reaching the unconscious mind and showing where the mistake lay. The hero of the poem exclaims at the end of it: "I see my mistake, for I remember it now, I am confirmed in my faith, I shall doubt no longer." We are all more or less mad when we make mistakes,

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\* *Bhagavad-Gita* by J. Cockburn Thomson.

for Freud has shown that he had the whole of mankind for his patients. The administration of the *Geeta* in such cases has never been easy, for it is difficult for ordinary men to understand it and it is not easy to believe in the doctrines propounded, except for those who accept it as a sacred book whose authority cannot be questioned. The modern scientific discoveries have thrown a light on it that may make its meaning clearer and the acceptance of its doctrine not altogether impossible for those who can accept nothing but the rational argument. Appearing superficially as a didactic poem, it reconciles the Vedic rites, the Sankhya philosophy of Kapila and the Yoga philosophy of Patanjali with a wonderful theism. It has incidentally raised the question of the relation of mind and matter with soul, creation and God, so that it has interest both for the scientist and the philosopher, whether ethical or religious.

The relation between science and religious philosophy is to-day more cordial than it has ever been during the last hundred years. There was a time during the middle of the last century when they were scarcely on speaking terms. In those days a scientist was necessarily taken as an atheist, and oftener than not, he was an atheist. Later the pendulum began to swing back and though atheism has since been fast vanishing, theism is not quite established. People are now not only willing but anxious to believe in God, only they do not know what sort of God ought to be believed in. And since the discovery of

"the principle of indeterminacy", science and the church have been so intimate that already a warning voice has been raised against such intimacy, and Einstein has dubbed "the principle of indeterminacy" as a temporary "asylum of ignorance". The atom stripped of all matter, and even of "picturability", has nothing left to it but a mathematical specification. The "configuration space" within which the waves representing the electron are confined, are certainly not ordinary physical space for the reason that each electron requires a three-dimensional configuration space for itself. It is evident, therefore, that the configuration space is not a physical reality, nor even a mental, for the human mind cannot conceive of such a space. The assumption has, however, been justified on the ground that it leads to calculated results which are confirmed by experiments. Here science has gone further than philosophy, for it has assumed a configuration space which has no existence, mental or physical, but yet is necessary. Einstein's theory of relativity has immensely simplified the world but the unification of nature is not yet complete. One great set of laws, namely, the electro-magnetic laws that govern the propagation of radiant energy through empty space, have not yet been brought into the scheme. It appears that a more complicated geometry than that of Riemann is necessary to include electro-magnetism. Eddington's attempt to geometrize the world in such a way as to include both gravitation and electro-magnetism ended in his contention that science tells us



nothing about the nature of reality but only about its structure. According to Eddington, the whole universe of matter is a much more subjective affair than we have hitherto supposed. It arises as a result of the mind's selective action on certain raw material. A different mind from ours would fashion a different universe out of this same raw material. There are certain mathematical consequences of the existence of this raw material to which our mind pays no attention. Such consequences do not form features in the universe of our perception. Out of all the different aspects or combinations the mind pays attention only to some. The philosopher, James, in his psychology laid stress on the activity of consciousness or experience, which under the influence of emotional or practical interests, selects for attention only certain things out of a multitude of simultaneous possibilities and in this way carves out a world of its own in the jointless continuity of space and moving clouds of swarming atoms. Any idea which cannot be tested by the fulfilment of sensory expectations we may legitimately "will to believe in" if emotional and practical interests favour it. The idea of God, for instance, is a case in point.

Science to-day believes space to be closed, but there is no complete unanimity as to whether time also is closed. The second law of thermodynamics is supposed to be against the theory of "eternal recurrence", but there are some scientists, at least, who believe that just as energy is being dissipated in some part of the

universe, in other parts where the exact reverse conditions prevail, it is being concentrated. This view is in accord with astronomical observations about the formation of new stars. If the world has always been running down, the question has to be answered as to how the first state of maximum organization came to be. The origin of the universe is not a problem that can be brought within the scheme to which science confines itself. Whether this indicates that the universe has a transcendental origin, or whether it indicates that science, as a scheme, is not yet completely coherent, is at present a matter of opinion.\* The transcendental origin has its difficulties too. The adherents of the "block universe" are fast losing ground. Steering clear of these two difficultly maintained views, the mean is an undying, uncreated universe with cycling periods. It is not a nightmare, as many have supposed it to be. The convection currents set up always maintain its novelty and interest, because there is no fixed determinism. The laws of nature are determinate, but they relate only to the resultant behaviour of the assemblage and not to the individuals who are allowed a limited freedom and whose idiosyncrasies cancel each other. This gives a new complexion to fixed fate and free will. There is no indeterminacy as the assemblage behaviour is predictable, which cannot be unless each individual variation is counterbalanced by its opposite. All creation

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\**The Physical Nature of the Universe* by J. W. Sullivan in *An Outline of Modern Knowledge*.

is essentially a splitting up of the neuter into positive and negative, into male and female, and recombining again in a different way. The neuter is stable and predictable, whereas its components have a limited freedom. This is well-marked both in the living and non-living. It is the neuter that does most of the observable work, the split-up components having only a short observable existence. That is why we have been so long in discovering the protons and electrons and the *gametes*. The atom, or rather the molecule, is neuter and the body of both the male and female living beings consists mainly of neutral cells or zygotes.

Modern religious philosophy deals with the three rational arguments for the existence of God, known as the ontological, cosmological and teleological. The first proceeds from the idea of God in the mind to infer the reality of God; the second argues from the existence of the cosmos that there must be a first cause or ground; the third reasons from the evidence of purposiveness in the world to the conclusion that there is a purposive mind behind or within it. These arguments are very old and each has its own weakness but they are supposed to have a cumulative corroborative effect. Some distinguished scientists and philosophers have been constrained to postulate mind as the ultimate reality and conceive nature as a complex thought. But few modern philosophers of religion would deny that there is always an act of faith in the affirmation of God's reality. We can never know that

God exists in the sense that we can prove the proposition by a chain of deductions beyond cavil and theoretical possibility of error. In the end there is always an act of will which decides to adopt the "nobler hypothesis", but it is a rational act of the will and is logically no more unreasonable than believing in the existence of other people which itself is incapable of rigid proof.\* This act of will is conversion.

In the present position of science and philosophy, a definition of either mind or matter is difficult. The position is summed up in the following facetious dialogue:—

Mr. Science—"What is mind?"

Mr. Philosophy—"No matter."

Mr. Philosophy—"What is matter?"

Mr. Science—"Never mind."

Out of this stalemate, Einstein has lifted us up and given us a true definition of matter and thus has contrasted it with mind. Einstein has been the Columbus of the universe. He has unwittingly stumbled on a truth which he never set out to discover. He had no idea that in trying to map out matter he has mapped out the confines of mind. Matter is limited by time and space but mind is not. A speed greater than 186,000 miles per second is not possible for matter to attain, but mind has no such limit, being swifter than the "winged arrows of light". In a world of matter which has a

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\* *The Idea of God* by Rev. Prof. W. R. Matthews.

radius of at least 2,000 million light years,\* light appears to the mind as a snail crawling. In such a world, intercommunication would be impossible if there were not swifter means of communication than light. The law of relativity holds good in a world of matter but not in a world of mind. In a world of mind, the Euclidean geometry and Newtonian law of gravitation hold good. The law of relativity has been called by some as a *tour de force*. Where space bends on itself, mind and matter meet. Beyond the confines of matter lies the world of mind. A combination of fragmentary mind and matter is an unstable emulsion, known as life, which requires much ado to keep together. Chemical and physical transformation are possible for matter but not for mind.

The combination of two such incompatible ones, as mind and matter, has given rise to many paradoxes. No general proposition about life is completely correct or wrong. Constituted as we are, we can only deal with partial truths. Every attempt to deal with the absolute in anything leads us to difficulties. Some one has said that if ever there was a mind so great as to comprehend the whole of the universe, simultaneously he could, starting with the nebulae, discover all the past, present and future. It is now held that he could not. In trying to ascribe omnipotence to God, we have to answer the question: "Can He make two plus two equal five?" Some say He can, and some say He cannot, while others say that

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\* *Astronomy* by Prof. R. A. Sampson.

He can but does not. As He is perfect, He cannot contradict Himself. That again leads to another difficulty. If He is perfect, why is there so much imperfection in this world? The question that has sorely tried Christian theology is how to reconcile divine perfection with the existence of evil in this world. Some have said that this world was only a school where we were being trained for future work and had, therefore, to be managed between "kicks and kisses", kicks for the naughty and kisses for the good. But if this world is only a school, which is our true sphere of action? Astronomy tells us that there is no other planet in this universe where beings like us can live. It has been suggested that after death we assume a tenuous body\* and live and work in other worlds taking with us our school certificate but returning again and again for refresher courses and finally severing our connection with this earth when the training is complete. This school of ours accepts no failure. All its students must pass out. Time counts for little as there is a plentiful supply of it. But feelings do count. Some pass out happily with the least amount of effort, others after very hard labour. Why this partiality of God? The difference arises from the imperious demand of time and space. In a world of matter, simultaneity in space and time is impossible for more than one. Every one has to carry his space and time with him and that is his fate. But justice is done to all if we suppose that we go through the same

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\* The doctrine of the transmigration of soul.

experience by turn. That, however, is impossible in a universe that is created all at once and after a time is destroyed all at once. That is against the idea of a block universe. It would wonderfully support us in our trials if we could believe that our present trouble was only a passing phase and that there was a mechanism which ensured justice to all. Further, it has been suggested that the idea of injustice was untenable as the person who really suffered was God Himself. We have all of us a spark from God which is our soul and since all feelings are due to the soul, it is really God who suffers or enjoys. The feelings of pleasure and pain are necessary to goad us to work. The feelings do not stay but the work stays and accumulates. The world work is being done by God residing, working and feeling both pleasure and pain with us, but minding neither. Both our feelings and our individuality are myths but not the work. Therefore, we should work and not mind pleasure and pain or individual justice. And we work all the better when we forget our feelings. That does not mean that we can ever get rid of the painful or pleasurable feelings that accompany all our activities. It only means that we refuse to be their bond-slaves, but do not mind free association with them. There is, no doubt, a contradiction in saying that it is our feelings which goad us to work and then saying that we ought not to mind the feelings. The contradiction is apparent, not real. With the broadening of the mind, instinctive interests are subordinated to

rational interests. The necessity of subordinating instinctive interest to rational interest has made us erect the noble edifice of duty. But duty is not one but many. There is the duty to our health, wealth, relations, castes, creeds, nation, man in general, and lastly, to God and the universe. The difficulty arises when these separate duties clash with each other which they frequently do. Whether health should be sacrificed to wealth is not always easy to decide, but the decision becomes easier when we do not exclusively view our own health and wealth but those of others too. There is consolation in the thought that my loss of wealth is what keeps the doctor going and my recovery of health is not only my gain but that of my relations and even of my country. It may just happen that the opposite is the case, sometimes. I may be over-feeding a pampered doctor or thrusting an unwelcome presence both on my relations and my country. In any case, the decision becomes easier and more rational.

The recognition that there is not one but many duties and that there is an hierarchy of duties, headed by God and ending with my own person is the highest enlightenment. This enlightenment comes with a certain kind of knowledge. According to the evolution of this enlightenment the universe may be graded. The lowest\* are so dark that lethargy is scarcely quickened into action by self-interest. The middling are very

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\* Sankhya theory of the *gunas*, *sattwa*, *raja* and *tama*.



self-interested and most active. In the highest, self-interest is replaced by universal interest, which is no interest, and lethargy, by rational activity. Though the three are readily recognized by their different actions, reactions and predilections, none is completely free from lethargy, activity or enlightenment. All are a combination of mind and matter. The difference is solely due to a progressive increase in the ascendancy of mind over matter. Anything which is pure matter or pure mind is outside our sense-perceptions.

There is no difference of opinion as to our duty to God having precedence over all other duties, but there is in some minds a tie between the duty to God and the duty to the universe. Thorough-going pantheists are entirely in favour of the latter while thorough-going theists are in favour of the former. Modified theism takes cognizance of both and makes God not only include but transcend the universe. The issue must not be confounded with the question of the personality of God which is quite different. With some the personality of God is a matter of necessity, with others it is a reality. It has been said that personal relations were only possible with a personal God, and the idea of God, if it was to be adequate, must be the idea of the highest and best that is conceivable. God cannot be less or lower than personal. So long as it is remembered that "super-personal" includes the "personal" and is not a polite synonym for "impersonal"; there ought to be no objection

to consider God as a super-personal being. Yet there are some rare minds who find nothing impossible in an abstract God who is symbolized by a sound, sign or a substance. There is, however, always a danger in symbolizing God. It is what the psychologists have called the transference of feelings from the end to the means. The fact has always to be borne in mind that the symbol is nothing but a symbol and that God never resides in the symbol more than in every other thing. Religion becomes fanaticism when the symbol is mistaken for God. In great minds this attachment to the symbol is never permitted and such men come to realize God in everything. When a man attains to this stage he is liberated from the bonds of matter. He becomes perfectly free, and nothing that he does can be harmful to himself or to others, for everybody and everything, including himself, is a part of God to whom he can do no violence or injustice. He then becomes emancipated, that is, outside the pale of all religion, morality, or society.

It has been said that science could never give us a religion, nor philosophy, a God. Religion must be revealed and God realized, and not made the subject of speculation. The divine messages\* can only be correctly received if your "receiver" is of infinite range, the "atmospherics" favourable, "enemy-jamming" absent, and the "tuning" correct. The "receiver" is

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\* Telepathy proves that the brain can function as a wireless set.

the product of heredity, the atmospherics are the "*tempora and mores*", "enemy-jamming", the passions, and "tuning", sympathy. The right combinations are extremely rare to which fact is due the rarity of revelation. The fact that revelation is rare is no proof of its absence, besides partial messages are of fairly frequent occurrence. Few who sincerely try under expert guidance completely fail to get a message. There exists quite a science of it known as the Yoga system of Patanjali, the Mesmer of the East. The main thing is to get rid of the passions, the "enemy-jamming". If you have even one enemy, all receptions may be jammed. Instead of having any evil thoughts against any one, you are to have a sort of love for not only mankind but for all living beings. After having made "enemy-jamming" impossible, you are to learn the art of tuning, that is, to have the right attitude towards God. What are all discoveries but divine messages that come as a result of intense study, application, attention, undisturbed by any other interest except that of the discovery? Do our scientific discoverers realize just how and when the truth flashes on them as an inspiration? Are not our scientific discoverers prophets who perform miracles? Between a scientific discoverer and a prophet, the difference lies only in the choice of the subject-matter. Science has selected the jugglery side of creation as its subject, which is merely temporal and cannot give lasting satisfaction. The subject of religion is different, requires a different approach and technique. The

revelations partake of the imperfections of the "receiver" and the "atmospherics", and that is why the revelations of no two prophets are exactly alike. But the difference relates to the sciences of the time and country and not to the essentials. We shall be mistaking the prophets if we judge or misjudge them by their scientific inaccuracies. The fact that science cannot recognize parthenogenesis in man, or that the world could not have been created in a week, does not vitiate Christianity. Neither the fact that one religion prescribes one kind of food, drink, clothes or marriage laws which another does not, justifies us in considering one as superior to the other. It is quite possible that each is quite suitable for the particular people and country which the prophet had in view. From this point of view, proselytizing may be very harmful when the religion of one prophet is extended to people in countries which differ materially from the country of the prophet. When the grain is sifted from the chaff, it is astonishing how the different religions agree in the essentials. A religion is to be judged by the abiding peace that it can give to the troubled soul. The privilege of sending out an SOS is the exclusive right of the shipwrecked. If piracy abuses it for its own aggrandizement, the SOS will cease to function, but it is every ship's duty to see that both its "receiver" and "transmitter" are kept in good trim, so that when the crisis comes they do not fail to function.

To what extent the Geeta has been able to winnow the chaff from the grain and has helped us to trim our "receiver" and "transmitter" is for each individual student of the Geeta to discover.

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## IDEOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

The oldest literature of the Indo-Aryans is known as the *Vedas*, meaning knowledge. As there are three principal *Vedas* they are called *Trayividyas*. As inspired revelations they are *Sruti* in opposition to the later venerable books classed as traditional learning or *Smriti*. The essential part of each *Veda* is a *Samhita* or collection of metrical hymns, prayers, etc. But certain supplementary writings are also considered as part of the *Vedas* being also inspired. These supplements written in prose are the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads*. The *Brahmanas* are theological and ritual treatises designed as manuals of worship and explanation of the *Samhitas*. The *Upanishads*, over a hundred in number, are philosophical tracts which belong to the later stage of *Brahman* literature. Certain of the *Upanishads* are parts of the *Vedas* being the foundations of the later and more systematic *Vedanta* philosophy. The *Sutras* are compendious treatises dealing with *Vedic* ritual or customary law, etc. Regarded as mere literature apart from their sacred origin, the *Vedas* demand from the students of humanity the most respectful attention on account of their remote antiquity, their unique character, and the light they shed upon the evolution of mankind, especially in India. The *Vedas* might have been written, or rather composed, any time between 4000 to 2000 B.C.

The *Vedas* were revealed to the '*Rishis* of whom Schopenhauer says:—"Yet in the early ages, those who stood nearer to the beginning of the human race had both greater energy of the intuitive faculties and a truer disposition of the mind, so that they were capable of a purer, more direct comprehension of the inner being of Nature and were thus in a position to satisfy the metaphysical need in a more worthy manner. Thus originated in the primitive ancestor of the *Brahmans*, *Rishis*, the almost superhuman conceptions which were afterwards set down in the *Upanishads* of the *Vedas*." The following is the metrical rendering of the celebrated Creation Hymn of the *Rigveda* by Max Muller:—

RIGVEDA, x, 129

Nor aught nor nought existed; yon bright sky  
Was not, nor heaven's broad woof outstretched  
above.  
What covered all? what sheltered? what concealed?  
Was it water's fathomless abyss?  
There was not death—yet was there nought  
immortal,  
There was no confine betwixt day and night;  
The only One breathed breathless by itself,  
Other than It there nothing since has been.  
Darkness there was, and all at first was veiled  
In gloom profound—an ocean without light—  
The germ that still lay covered in the husk  
Burst forth, one nature, from the fervent heat.  
Then first came love upon it, the new spring  
Of mind—yea, poets in their hearts discerned,  
Pondering, this bond between created things  
And uncreated. Comes this spark from earth  
Piercing and all-pervading, or from heaven?  
Then seeds were sown, and mighty powers arose—  
Nature below, and power and will above—  
Who knows the secret? who proclaimed it here,  
Whence, whence this manifold creation sprang?  
The Gods themselves came later into being—

Who knows from whence this great creation sprang?  
 He from whom all this great creation came,  
 Whether his will created or was mute,  
 The Most High Seer that is in highest heaven,  
 He knows it—or perchance even He knows not.

What is merely hinted at in this Hymn of Creation was subsequently elaborated by the authors of the *Sankhya* philosophy, *Vedanta* and the Geeta. The points to remember are the latent and patent existence of the creation, the emergence of love or desire and mind and the three mighty powers, nature below, and power and will above, corresponding to matter, vital principle and soul.

Most of the hymns are invocations to the gods, *Agni* or Fire, *Indra*, *Surya* or Sun etc. of esoteric significance. The gods are represented as great and powerful, disposed to do good to their worshippers, and engaged in unceasing conflicts with the powers of the evil. The hymns usually beg for material favours and seek to win the deity's goodwill by offering prayers and sacrifices. The sacrifices were offered to Fire and usually consisted of various preparations from milk, starch, meat and also drink. The things offered were called *Habya*, and the act, *Ahuti*, the whole ceremony being called *Yajna*. Some of the *Yajnas* were called *Nitya* or compulsory as they had to be performed daily and the non-performance of which was considered as a dereliction of duty. Sacrifices performed for a specific purpose were called *Kamyas*. Others which had to be performed for marriage and other ceremonies were called

*Smartha*, while others like the horse-sacrifice, were called *Sroutha*. To have eaten what was left after the sacrifices was to have eaten manna. Sacrifices were also offered to the departed ancestors in the shape of balls of rice, libations of water, etc., at fixed intervals, on which the departed souls were supposed to subsist. The duty to man was discharged by daily entertaining guests, usually travellers, before the mid-day meal. The man who ate that meal without first offering it to a guest, 'ate sin' as the expression was.

The Vedic age was the most glorious period of the Indo-Aryans and kept the men always active with *yajnas* and looking to a better future as the reward for their sacrifices. Society was divided into classes on an occupational basis. The teachers and the priests formed the *Brahmana* caste. The military and the ruling classes were the *Kshatriyas*, to which the hero of the poem belongs. The traders and the agriculturists formed the *Vaishya* caste and the serving class was called the *Shudras*.

Certain religious books of the ancient Hindus were a close preserve for only a certain class. The general public and practically all women, with only a very few notable exceptions, had no access to them. This drawback was to a great extent remedied by Krishna Dwaipayana Vyasa who wrote the monumental epic poem, *Mahabharata* of 100,000 couplets and made available to the public at large, in the shape of interesting narrations, the whole of the Hindu religious



literature. This Mahabharata contained the Geeta, the crowning glory of Hindu religious literature. Some, however, are of opinion that the Geeta was a separate production, subsequently introduced into the Mahabharata. But the fact that there are in the body of the Mahabharata seven references to the Geeta and 27 couplets of the Mahabharata are to be bodily found in the Geeta, besides many others of partial resemblances and that the style of the two is very similar, are considerations that have led others to conclude that the Geeta was really a part of the Mahabharata.

In places the Geeta resembles the *Upanishads* but does not fully agree with them. The greatest difference between the Geeta and the *Upanishads* is in the worship of a Personal God. Both the Geeta and the *Upanishads* agree that the sacrifices or *yajnas* are the means and not the end of religion, but the *Upanishads* do not acknowledge the Personality of God, though from the difficulty of contemplating an abstract god, or having communion with Him, the *Upanishads* admit the worship of such deified natural phenomena as the Sun, Fire, etc. The love of a Personal God, devotion to Him and His worship constitute the highest development of the knowing, willing and feeling, the coping-stone of the Geeta. Yet the Geeta does not ban the *yajnas*, but on the contrary, recommends them as useful for the purification of the body, provided always that the temporary nature of their results is well borne in the mind.

Knowledge is the principal theme of the *Brihadaranyaka* and *Chandogya Upanishads*, yet there is no reference to the *Sankhya* of Kapila in them, for the *Sankhya* of Kapila was a later production. The words *mahan* and *avyakta*, however, occur in the *Upanishads*, showing that Kapila was to some extent indebted to the *Upanishads* for his ideas. Terms, expressions and ideas of the *Sankhya* occupy such a large portion of the *Geeta* that for the proper understanding of the *Geeta* they must be well understood. The following is a brief account of *Sankhya* :—

Maharshi Kapila is the originator of the *Sankhya* system of philosophy. According to him our unhappiness is due to our inability to realize the difference between *Purusha* and *Prakriti*, or soul and body, or mind and matter. Kapila classifies unhappiness into three :—*Adhyatmic*, *Adhibhoutic* and *Adhidaivic*. That unhappiness that is created inside us is called *Adhyatmic* which is sub-divided into bodily and mental. Bodily unhappiness is due to disease and mental unhappiness is due to desire, anger, covetousness, fear and sorrow. Unhappiness caused by other men or animals or material things is called *Adhibhoutic*, and that caused by the *Devatas* of esoteric significance is called *Adhidaivic*. Complete freedom from these three kinds of unhappiness is called *Mukti* or liberation. *Vivekajnan* or the knowledge of *Prakriti* and *Purusha* is the means for the attainment of *Mukti*.

According to *Sankhya*, our sufferings compel us to seek out that knowledge which tells us

how sufferings can be avoided. *Sankhya* does so and, therefore, men must listen to it.

The Vedic *yajnas* can give us happiness but that is mixed with the unhappiness of killing animals which is against *ahimsa*. Besides, the happiness in heaven that is merited by the performance of *yajnas* is temporary. But the happiness that *Vivekajnan* gives is unmixed and is sanctioned by the Vedas.

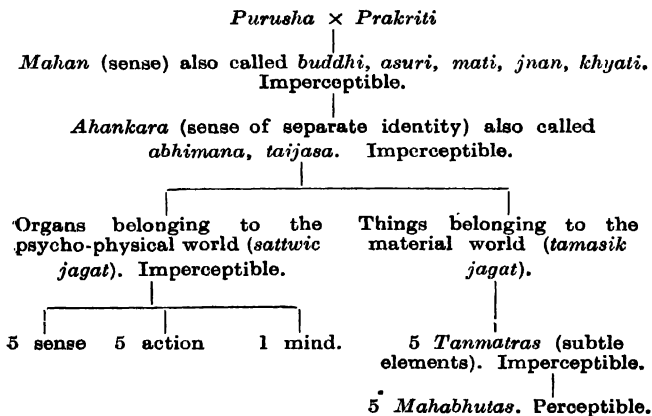
The contact of the sense organs with the sense objects is called *vritti*. This *vritti* has the effect of exciting the *sattwa guna* (happiness) and of depressing the *tama guna* (unhappiness). This excitation is called *adhyavasaya*, contact and knowledge. This knowledge is proof or *pramana*. That which results from this proof is called *prama* or understanding. *Prakriti* has no understanding and *buddhi* which has emerged from *prakriti* has no understanding also. *Purusha* has understanding but it cannot have sensations without the medium of the sense organs. Hence *Purusha* has to depend on *Prakriti* for the sensations.

According to *Sankhya* that which cannot be perceived by the sense organs can yet be inferred by the mind and that which cannot be inferred by the mind can be proved by revelation.

The real meaning of *Prakriti* is that which is the cause of the emergence of something else. That which emerges is called *vikriti*. A *vikriti* that is the cause of the emergence of another *vikriti* is called *prakriti-vikriti*. And that *vikriti* which is not the cause of the emergence of

another *vikriti*, is simply *vikriti*, *Prakriti* which is itself not a *vikriti* is the *Mula Prakriti*. It has, therefore, no cause. *Prakriti* is *jara*, that is, it follows the laws of matter and not of mind. *Purusha* is neither *prakriti*, nor *vikriti*. It does not follow the laws of matter. Understanding is its function. The sense organs, the efferent and afferent nerves and the brain (called mind by *Sankhya*) and their excitations by the vibrations of matter, in whatsoever form it may be, are the products of *Prakriti*, but their sensing is impossible without *Purusha*.

The following is the genealogical tree of the 25 categories of Kapila :--



These 25 categories are divided into four classes :--

1. *Purusha*, neither *prakriti*, nor *vikriti*.
2. *Prakriti*, neither *vikriti*, nor *Purusha*.

3. *Mahan, ahankara* and the 5 *tanmatras*—*prakriti-vikriti*.

4. 5 sense organs, 5 action organs, 1 mind and the 5 *mahabhutas*—*vikriti*.

The 5 sense organs are the eyes, ears, nostrils, tongue and the skin. The 5 action organs are the hands, feet, mouth and the two excretory organs. The 5 *tanmatras* are the causes of the 5 *mahabhutas*, viz., solids, liquids, gases, light and ether. What *Sankhya* calls *Purusha* the *Vedanta* calls the Superior Self of the *Parabrahma* and the *Geeta* calls the *Apara prakriti*.

Before creation begins, *Mula Prakriti* is in the *avyakta* or latent state in which the three *gunas*, *sattva* (happy), *raja* (not happy) and *tama* (unhappy) are in equilibrium. *Mula Prakriti* becomes patent when this equilibrium is disturbed by the conjugation of *Purusha* with it. This conjugation has been likened to the partnership of the blind with the lame or of the locomotive with the steam. Changes and the laws of matter begin to operate after this conjugation takes place. In the *avyakta* state there is no change. *Purusha* is not subject to the laws of matter.

Man, therefore, consists of the following:—

(1) *Purusha* or soul or mind which has been called *jeeva* by the *Vedanta*, (2) *buddhi*, (3) *ahankara*, (4) the 11 organs, (5) the 5 *tanmatras* and (6) the 5 *mahabhutas*.

What is ordinarily called death is the separation of the five perceptible *mahabhutas* from the imperceptible ones. Science has now made us familiar with a host of things in the

material world which are imperceptible. These are mainly the invisible radiant energies and the microscopic bodies. If man can exist after death it must be as the invisible radiant energies that he does so. After death the imperceptible categories are supposed to inhere in an imperceptible body called fine body. It reappears in a visible body when it gets a chance to combine with the 5 *mahabhutas*. The reappearance of the fine body is the rebirth or transmigration of the fine body and not of the soul alone. The nature of the material of the new body is dependent on the past actions of the last body and the consequent disposition of the imperceptible categories at the time of death.

By identifying *Purusha* with mind and *Prakriti* with matter we can understand the underlying truth of *Sankhya*. Between mind and matter they give us the two separate ideas of 'I' and 'ME'. The contact of the organs with the objects gives us the sensations, aided by the mind. The genes in the chromosomes are the microscopic representatives of the invisible elements of the organs.\*

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\*Some very curious discoveries were made by Drs. G. B. Stearns, Mary Stark, a world-renowned genetist and Wm. E. Boyd. In some of the high Homeopathic dilutions of the 30th ( $100^{-30}$ ) and above in which no matter can be detected by physical or chemical means, radiations have been detected which pass through walls. Such radiations have also been detected in living plants and animals. Dr. Stearns' theory is that in the high dilutions which are like high vacuums, matter is emasculated as in the inter-stellar space and attains what he calls the fourth state of matter, solids, liquids and the gases being the first three. He concludes that when matter has been sublimated to the pure state of energy by means of infinite dilution, its profound effect on living processes makes possible another concept, namely, in the same

Inheritance is a sort of inherence, a rebirth of pre-existing groups of characters. Biology to-day recognizes the role of mind in organic evolution. Self-subordination and materialized ethical processes have been observed in the lower animals. Living implies both individual and racial enregistrations. It is characteristic of organisms that each is affiliated to the past and normally parental to the future.†

The five *tanmatras* are the subtil elements of the five *mahabhutas*. According to modern science, they are heat which accounts for the first three states of matter, electricity which accounts for all elements and electro-magnetism which accounts for light and ether. The real difference between science and *Sankhya* to-day is that the former has no evidence which justifies it in inferring that the fine categories after the death of the body inhere in a fine body as an individual. Science makes rebirth the joint responsibility of the predecessors, while *Sankhya* makes it the sole responsibility of the individual. The difference is not small but the mass result practically is the same. Both agree that the present generation is greatly responsible for the mental and material equipment of the next and

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way as the inter-relation of matter makes a living body, the inter-relation of the energies of matter in the fourth state makes up the substance of life. High dilutions have not only cured tumours in the fruit-fly, *drosophila melanogaster* lethal No. 7, but changed the hereditary lethal factor which occurred in accord with the Mendelian law in every fourth fly.

† *Biology and Human Progress* by Prof. Sir J. Arthur Thomson.

hence for the latter's happiness and unhappiness. It is only the ignorant who deny that responsibility.

But there is one great difference between *Sankhya* and modern science. *Sankhya* makes both the living and the non-living emerge from the combination of mind and matter, while the tendency of science is to evolve mind from matter, or at least not to recognize the existence of mind apart from matter. Modern philosophers do not all agree with science there.

*Vivekajnan*, therefore, Kapila argues, is our salvation. He has, however, left the whole kingdom of faith untouched. The gap left by him has been very worthily filled up by Bhagwan Patanjali. He realized the potential power of the mind to transcend matter. The mind can, starting with relative knowledge, reach the absolute. Knowing that there is one thing that is greater than another, we can imagine that there must be one who is the greatest of all. Similarly there must be one who is the most knowing, the longest living, the highest and the best. These attributes cannot belong to separate persons, for then they would lead to chaos. Therefore all the highest attributes must belong to one person. That is the logical conclusion that comes from the unlimitedness of our mind but it is inconsistent with the limitedness of matter. Patanjali exploited the unlimitedness of mind to the full, the word 'exploited' being understood in its proper sense.

Faith, however, is not a mentalized understanding but direct seeing into the heart of



things. It is also dynamic and its dynamic character is exhibited in its marvellous performances. It can cure diseases, both mental and physical. It can make us cheerfully endure an incredible amount of suffering. It can send men to the stake and it can cause crusades. Like everything dynamic it has to be handled carefully. Uninformed faith may be dangerous. Though faith and knowledge are different they are yet related. That is why the Geeta has put such emphasis on knowledge and given the highest position to Kapila amongst the *munis*, as the exponent of the *Sankhya* doctrine of knowledge and renunciation. The real value of renunciation lies in affording a release from the insurgent ways of life and in intimating us with the divine ways. But contemplation and renunciation can be overdone, for they have their seductions. The history of India in the post-Kapila period bears ample testimony to the truth of it. \* Kings and soldiers came under their spell and forsook the religion of their castes for that of the *sannyasi*. The most notable examples are the authors of the Bauddha and Jain religions. From the national point of view, the desertion spelt disaster to India whose armed strength was unmanned. The conclusion is inescapable that the first part of the Geeta was addressed to these deserters from the lines as represented by Arjuna. Some argue that the Geeta is not an ethical poem but religious, and that is only too true, for it tells us at the very end that all ethics should be given up for the fountain-head of all ethics

and duty replaced by faith. But this ethics of ethics has been gradually evolved starting from worldly ethics at the beginning.

The doctrine of *Karmayoga* that the *Geeta* preaches tells us that true renunciation is not the renunciation of matter, which cannot be done so long as we are in the material body, but the renunciation of the bodily or material desires. This renunciation of desires can be fully practised without giving up either society, religion and the proper use of the material necessities of life, provided it is all done in a spirit of detachment. But the merit of the *Geeta* does not lie there alone. A great deal of its popularity is due to its catholicity and the consummate skill with which not only *Sankhya* but all the older religions of the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads* are telescoped into it. The merit of each of the older religions is not only recognized but extolled and the defects pointed out in a way that takes the sting away. It had the effect of gathering them all under one banner like the manipulation of a great general. But not even this skill is the whole merit of the *Geeta*, for out of the ashes of cold stones and lukewarm timber of pantheism and the deified forces of nature it has evolved a wonderful personal God of flesh and blood whom we can love, cherish, worship and have intimate personal relations with, a very human God whom all of us can understand, yet of infinite powers, wisdom and extent. But where is this God of flesh and blood to be found and how? He is to be found by unswerving faith as He tells you at the end

of the Geeta, not in books, pictures or idols, but in you and by you. This unswerving faith requires that you should be able to believe nothing impossible of Him. Anything that appears physically impossible to you is possible of Him. If you cannot believe that He can draw an elephant through a needle's eye, or make two and two equal five, you have not come to have the unswerving faith in Him. But if you have that faith you can find Him, searching with ceaseless endeavour. He will discover to you in a form you most desire, smile, or frown at you, encourage or discourage, answer your questions, touch with His healing hand the sore spots in you, accept from your hand whatever you may offer to Him in worship, be it a flower, fruit, or even a leaf. But some men are so constituted that they cannot have such a faith. For such men there is another approach, but it is the more difficult way—the way of knowledge.

You have to know what energy is, congealed and uncongealed. You have also to learn what the Supreme Energy is, that is neither congealed, nor not-congealed. You have to realize that you are built up of both congealed and uncongealed energy; that congealed energy is mechanistic but that uncongealed energy in you representing your mind, or soul can transcend the congealed energy, or matter in you. This transcending of the material is to be done by a mental and moral training called *yogabhyasa*. By *yama* and *niyama* your sense organs have to be got perfectly under control and the mind purged of all evil thoughts

of injuring others. A love of all created beings must pervade you that will make you one with the universe. In short, you have to bring yourself up to the cosmic level and feel the cosmic tremor that will open the gate of the Supreme energy and effect a junction. Nothing will then be unavailable to you. Beauty will then be more beautiful, holiness holier, and truth acquire a divine meaning. The inertia of your nature, the play of forces that prevents the complete revelation of your nature as dynamically one with God will then vanish. You will realise God as you never could otherwise, but not a personal God. That is *yoga* which every chapter of the Geeta is; that is *yoga* which was systematised by Patanjali, the Mesmer of the East, as the West has wrongly called him, for mesmerism differs from *yoga* as much as anaesthetized unconsciousness from healthy sleep. The word *yoga* has been the stumbling-block to many a student of the Geeta. It has been used in so many different senses. We have been told that Sanjaya who was the mouthpiece of the Geeta, was by the *yoga* power of Krishna Dwaipayana Vyasa gifted with television and telephony by virtue of which he was able to see and hear what happened in the distant field of Kurukshetra from Hastinapur. The caption of each chapter of the Geeta ends with the word *yoga*. It has been explained that Shree Krishna was in a state of *yoga* or junction with the Supreme Being when he was speaking to Arjuna and that was why each chapter begins and ends with the word *yoga*. Again *maya* or creation

has been called the *yoga* power of God. In another place dexterity in action has been called *yoga*. In other places *yoga* has been used to denote the *Karmayoga* of the Geeta, its special doctrine. In one place equanimity has been called *yoga*. In the 700 couplets of the Geeta, the word *yoga* occurs about 80 times, alone or in conjunction with other words. Alone it occurs about 33 times, 16 occurring in the 6th chapter alone. In only about 6 places it has been used in the sense of Patanjali. The radical meaning of the word is junction, from which have come the meanings addition, meeting, company and the means, reasoning or skill in attaining it. The student of the Geeta would be well-advised to remember all these meanings.

The student of the Geeta has also to understand what is meant by the phrase "snapping the bonds of action". The *Mimansakas* or the commentators on the Vedas have divided actions into four classes: 1. *Nitya* or obligatory; 2. *Naimittika* or occasional; 3. *Kamya* or purposive; and 4. *Nishiddha* or forbidden. The daily actions must be performed, there is no getting out of them. The occasional actions also must be performed to meet emergencies. By going through the *Nitya* and *Naimittika* actions, we expiate our sins of the past to which we were affiliated, and by cancelling the affiliation we buy exemption from rebirth. Forbidden actions must not be performed, for they lead to hell. If in addition *Kamya* actions are also not performed,

both heaven and hell are excluded and we are led to *moksha*. This theory of the *Mimansakas* is called *Naishkarma siddhi* or *Karma mukti*. That state in which the performance of actions does not bind is called *Naishkarma*. Both the *Geeta* and the *Vedanta* do not accept this theory. Both also deny the possibility of gaining *Naishkarma siddhi* by renunciation. Besides, residence in heaven is temporary. Therefore, they say that the only way to "snap the bonds of action" is to acquire the knowledge of the laws which govern actions. The laws governing actions are that the laws of matter or congealed energy are inexorable. Once you are in its clutches, you are endlessly to revolve with the wheels of its machinery. The body, so far as it consists of matter, is a slave to that law, but the mind or uncongealed energy, not being confined to the space-time continuum, is independent of the body. The body is mechanical but not the mind. The freedom of the will is obtained by realizing the oneness of the soul with the Universal Soul. It will be recalled that the first effect of the activation of *Prakriti* by *Purusha*, or the fixation of energy in the space-time continuum, was the emergence of *mahan* or *buddhi* and the next, *ahankara*. The realization of the oneness of the soul with the Universal Soul is the snapping of the bond. It is a victory of the mind over matter, the true liberation. With this enlightenment it is possible for the soul to act in co-operation with the body without being attached to it by material desires. It enables us to do

the world's work without sordid desires. That is the doctrine of *Karmayoga*.

Though knowledge is the first step for the realization of the soul, it is not the only one. The giving up of sordid desires is always difficult and can only be done by the co-operation of the mind with the body. Both the body and the mind must be gradually trained by the long and patient performance of the *yajnas*, *yamas*, *niyamas* and other practices. They are the drills.

What exactly is meant by the *gunas* has also to be well understood. Remembering that though they appear with the creation but are yet not included in the categories, we may presumably conclude that they are not things *per se* but the condition of all things, caused by the inter-relations of the categories. Evolution is like the progress of an air-balloon from the bottom of the ocean to the surface. Man, the last in the evolutionary process, is the balloon on the surface of the ocean. Three courses are open to him—up, down or horizontal. The direction of his course is determined by the expansion or contraction of his soul, the former being in inverse proportion to the thickness of his outer cover or body. The movement from the bottom of the ocean to the surface is automatic. Further expansion that would carry him from the surface upwards is rational and based on 'self-exertion. To remain satisfied with the position on the surface is to take the horizontal direction—to take the good with the bad, the buffets of winds and waves

with the serenity of a calm sea. To try to thicken the outer coating is to go down under the waves again. The popping up from under the waves and the going down under them set up the convection currents that are the romances of life or *samsar*, called creation.

The three directional movements—up, down and horizontal—profoundly affect everything in us—our thoughts, actions and predilections, so much so that by studying these one can predict in which direction a man is moving. The Geeta has, therefore, devoted a large space to them.

The word *Brahma* has been used in the Geeta about 40 times but not always in the same sense. The different meanings are due to the different conceptions of *Brahma*. The phenomenal world is called *jagat*. It is evanescent, not eternal, but it is the basis of all our sense perceptions and hence of direct knowledge as we wrongly call it. From its changing nature it was early seen that it was not a true representative of the fundamental truth. The fundamental truth underlying the phenomenal world or *jagat* was called *Brahma* by the *Vedanta*. The question arose as to what its relations were to the soul and God. Sometimes it has been used in the Kapilian sense of *Prakriti* where it is female, as also when it is spoken of as the womb of God. These ideas have come from the Vedas. The soul is the real knower of all things and the real knowledge is *Brahma* or the truth underlying *jagat* or the phenomenal world. The



soul is, therefore, called the *jñata* \* or the knower. The phenomenal world is called *jñan* or knowledge, and *Brahma* is called *jñeya* or the thing to be known or real knowledge. The distinction between these three—*jñata*, *jñan* and *jñeya*—is due to *ahankara*. The soul is a part of God who alone can know. The soul is uncongealed energy and matter, the subject of apparent knowledge is congealed energy. The congelation is due to the fixation in the space-time continuum. Now if the link between space and time could be somehow eliminated, the difference between *jñata*, *jñan* and *jñeya* would disappear and the three would coalesce. When this happens, that is, when the soul observes no differences between itself and other bodies, it comes to be one with the universe. This state is called *Brahmatmaikya*, the sameness of the soul with the *Brahma*. It is the highest perfection which enables one to feel for others as he feels for himself. In that state no man can harm another in thought, speech or action. All human problems find a solution in that state. It causes *Brahmanirvana*. What matter divides, mind unites. And God unites them both.

The doctrine of renunciation spread from India to Europe after the invasion of India by Alexander, as noticed in the change in Greek philosophy. Post-Aristotelian philosophy is predominantly ethical or religious and commended the cultivation of equanimity or peace of mind, and self-emancipation

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\* *Jñan*, *jñata* and *jñeya* have been used here in their special senses. Ordinarily *jñata* is *jeeva* or subject. *Jñeya* is the phenomenal world, object. And *jñan* is the relation between the two or the act of knowing.

from the bondage of matter. Stoic pantheism, in part at least, was the first fruit of the new contact between Greeks and Orientals in Alexandria which was founded by Alexander in 322 B.C. In Alexandria too were some Jewish philosophers and traces of their influence are to be found in the Bible. The resemblance between the Bible and the Geeta has been traced by some to this contact between the East and the West, though disputed by others. It really does not matter who the real author of the doctrine is. It is quite possible that the ideas occurred independently, and if that be true, the truth discovered was doubly true, because for two prophets to have discovered the same truth meant that it was to some extent independent of time and place.

## PROPER INTRODUCTION

About a quarter of the Mahabharata is occupied with the war between the Kurus and the Pandavas. The Kurus were a branch of the Indo-Aryans who were of sufficient importance to disturb the whole of the north of India with their factions, and to make its battles the theme of the longest epic poem of olden time. At the time when the plot of the Mahabharata was enacted, the Kurus were occupying the plain of the Doab, which one of their ancestors cleared of forests and brought under the plough, and was called the plain of the Kurus, or Kurukshetra. Satisfied with the worship of one of the Kurus, the god Indra blest it, so that any one dying there was sure to gain heaven. That accounted for the greatest number of wars having been waged there and also gained for it the name of 'sacred plain'.

The capital of the country was Hastinapur, near modern Delhi, and there reigned a king called Vichitravirya, son of Shantanu and Satyawati and half-brother of Bheeshma. His two wives, Amba and Ambika, had two sons, Dhritarashtra and Pandu. The former had one hundred sons, the eldest of whom was Duryodhana. The latter married Pritha or Kunti and Madri. The three sons of Kunti were Yudhishtira, Bheema and Arjuna and the two sons of Madri were Nakula

and Sahadeva. The eldest brother, Yudhishtira, was extremely scrupulous, while Bheema was a giant and Arjuna, the most skilful warrior.

Dhritarashtra was blind, yet retained the throne, while his son Duryodhana really directed the affairs of the state. The latter was a contentious intriguer and prevailed upon his father to banish his cousins, the Pandava princes, from the country. After long wanderings and varied hardships, these princes collected their friends around them, formed by the help of many neighbouring kings a vast army and prepared to attack their unjust opponents, who had in like manner assembled a bigger force. Bheeshma, whose real sympathies were with the Pandavas, was obliged to side with the Kurus, as also Drona, a Brahman military instructor to all the princes, both Kuru and Pandava. Krishna, a Kshatriya king, was the friend, philosopher and guide of the Pandavas and volunteered to be Arjuna's charioteer. Bheeshma, the oldest warrior, commanded the Kurus, while Bheema commanded the Pandavas.

The scene of the poem now opens and remains throughout the same—the field of battle. Krishna is presented as the personification of the Divine Wisdom.

## CHAPTER I

### THE SORROW OF ARJUNA<sup>1</sup>

Dhritarashtra<sup>2</sup> spoke :

What did my people and the Pandavas<sup>3</sup> do, when assembled for the purpose of fighting on the sacred plain Kurukshetra<sup>4</sup>, O Sanjaya?<sup>5</sup> 1

Sanjaya spoke :

When king Duryodhana<sup>6</sup> beheld the army of the Pandavas<sup>7</sup> drawn up in order, he then approached his preceptor<sup>8</sup> and spoke these words : 2

Behold, O Preceptor, this huge army of the sons of Pandu, drawn up by thy clever pupil, the son of Drupada.<sup>9</sup> 3

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A translation of the Geeta, not so literal as to turn away the average reader, is here presented and the reader is left free to interpret it as best as he may, for the spirit has been disputed by many annotators according to their own lights. The reader should not forget that it is a poem that he reads and all the poetic licences are admissible with the rather peculiar mode of Sanskrit expression and repetition of the same ideas in different forms.

At the end of the heading of each chapter occurs the word *yoga*, the meaning of which has been differently interpreted. Some one has said that Shree Krishna was in a state of *yoga* or junction with God when He spoke. Hence each chapter is a *yoga*. As the word is common to all the headings it will be omitted.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. See Proper Introduction.

9. Drupada, king of Panchala, near modern Chumbal, and father of Dhristadyumna, Shikhandin and Krishna or Draupadee and hence father-in-law of the five Pandava princes.

In it are warriors with huge bows, equal to Bheema and Arjuna in battle, namely, Yuyudhana<sup>10</sup> and Virata, and Drupada, a *maharathi*; <sup>11</sup> Dhristaketu, <sup>12</sup> Chekitana, <sup>13</sup> and the valiant king of Kashi, <sup>14</sup> Kuntibhoja <sup>15</sup> Purujit and Shaivya, <sup>16</sup> chief of men; and Yudhamanyu <sup>17</sup> the strong and Uttamaauja <sup>18</sup> the brave, the son of Subhadra, <sup>19</sup> and all the sons of Draupadee, all *maharathas*.

4-6.

But mark those, who are the most distinguished amongst us, the leaders of my army, O Best of Brahmans. I will name them to thee that thou mayest know them. 7

There are thyself, and Bheeshma, and Karna, <sup>20</sup> and Kripa, <sup>21</sup> victorious in battle, Ashwatthama, <sup>22</sup>

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10. Yuyudhana, son of Satyaka and hence also called Satyaki, belongs to the tribe of Yadu, the same to which Krishna belongs.

11. One who could engage ten thousand bowmen at a time was called a *maharathi*.

12. Son of Shishupala, king of Chedi.

13. A king belonging to the tribe of Yadu.

14. Modern Benares.

15. Kuntibhoja Purujit is one person. He was maternal uncle to the first three Pandava princes.

16. King of the Shibis, supposed to be the Sibae of the Greeks.

17 and 18. These guarded the two wheels of the chariot of Arjuna.

19. Wife of Arjuna and mother of Abhimanyu.

20. Karna was the king of the Ananga but he was really a step-brother to the Pandavas, but neither he, nor the Pandavas had any suspicion of the truth which was only known to their mother Kunti. He joined the Kurus and was as great a fighter as Arjuna himself.

21. Kripa was the king of the Panchalas.

22. Ashwatthama was the nephew of Kripa and son of Drona.

and Vikarna,<sup>23</sup> and Saumadatti<sup>24</sup> too, and many other heroes who risk their lives for my sake, armed with diverse weapons, all experienced in war. 8-9

This army of mine, commanded by Bheeshma, is very great; but that army of theirs, commanded by Bheema, is smaller and do each of you in your respective positions, guarding the approaches, protect Bheeshma alone. 10-11

Then, in order to encourage him, the ardent old ancestor of the Kurus, after making a loud sound like the roar<sup>25</sup> of a lion, blew his conch-shell. 12

Then on a sudden, trumpets, horns and different kinds of drums were sounded. That noise grew to an uproar. 13

And standing on a great car drawn by white horses, Krishna and Arjuna blew their celestial conch-shells.<sup>26</sup> 14

Krishna blew his conch-shell called Panchajanya,<sup>27</sup> Arjuna blew his Devadatta, Bheema blew his great Paundra. 15

King Yudhisthira,<sup>28</sup> the son of Kunti,<sup>29</sup> blew Anantavijaya; Nakul<sup>30</sup> and Sahadeva blew Sughosa and Manipushpaka. 16

23. Vikarna was the third son of Dhritarashtra.

24. Saumadatti was the son of Saumadatta.

25. Refers to the custom of shouting and sounding the conch-shell as a signal for beginning the battle, something like the war-cry.

26. The conch-shell served the purpose of the bugle or war-trumpet and often received a "nom-de-guerre" from its owner.

27. Panchajanya, Devadatta, etc., were "noms-de-guerre".

28, 29, 30. See Proper Introduction.

The king of Kashi, renowned for the excellence of his bow and Shikhandi<sup>31</sup> the *maharatha*, Dhristadyumna,<sup>32</sup> and Virata<sup>33</sup> and Satyaki,<sup>34</sup> unconquered by his foes; and Drupada and the sons of Draupadee, all these, O king of earth! and the strong-armed son of Subhadra,<sup>35</sup> each severally blew his conch-shell. 17-18

That sound lacerated the hearts of the sons of Dhritarashtra, an uproar resounding both through heaven and earth. 19

O king of earth! then seeing order restored amongst the Dhartarashtras and the arrows about to be shot out, Arjuna raised his bow and addressed these words to Krishna: "Place my chariot, O Achyuta!<sup>36</sup> between the two armies that I may examine these men drawn up and anxious for battle, and see with whom I have to fight in this strife of war and see those well-wishers of the evil-minded sons of Dhritarashtra, who are assembled here." 20-23

Sanjaya spoke:

O Bharata!<sup>37</sup> Krishna being thus addressed by Arjuna drew up that best of chariots between the two armies; before Bheeshma and Drona and

31. Shikhandi was the brother of Draupadee, wife of the Pandavas.

32. Dhristadyumna, brother of Shikhandi.

33. Virata, king of the Matsyas.

34. Satyaki, same as Yuyudhana.

35. Sister of Krishna and wife of Arjuna.

36. Achyuta means the eternal one, that is, Krishna.

37. "Bharata" means any descendant of Bharata from whom India has come to be called Bharatavarsha. Here it means Dhritarashtra whom Sanjaya is addressing.



all the kings of the earth, he said: "Behold O Partha, these Kurus assembled here." 24-25

Standing there, Partha<sup>38</sup> beheld uncles, grand-uncles, preceptor, maternal uncle, brothers, sons, grandsons, friends, fathers-in-law and acquaintances in both the armies. Gazing on all these relations drawn up in battle array, the son of Kunti, moved by extreme compassion, spoke with sadness as follows:

Arjuna spoke:

Now that I have beheld these kinsmen standing here near together for the purpose of fighting, my limbs give way and my mouth is dried up. My body is trembling and my hair stands on end, my bow Gandiva<sup>39</sup> slips from my hand and my skin burns. Nor am I able to remain upright, and I perceive, O Krishna! evil omens. Nor do I foresee any good even when I shall have slain these relations in battle. I seek no victory, Krishna, nor a kingdom, nor pleasures. What should we do with a kingdom, Govinda! what with enjoyment or life itself when these very men on whose account we might desire a kingdom, enjoyments or pleasure—are assembled for battle risking their lives and riches, preceptor, uncles, sons, grand-uncle, maternal uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law, also relations—these I would not wish to slay, though I were slain myself,

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38. "Partha" is a metronymic name for Arjuna.

39. "Gandiva" is the "nom-de-guerre" for Arjuna's bow.

O Madhusudana<sup>40</sup> — not even for the sake of sovereignty of the triple<sup>41</sup> world, much less than for that of this earth. When we had killed the Dhartarashtras what pleasure would we have, O Janardana?<sup>42</sup> We should incur a crime by killing these villains.<sup>43</sup> 26-36

Therefore we ought not to kill the Dharta-rashtras, our own relations, for could we be happy after killing our own kindred, O Madhava?<sup>44</sup> 37

Even if they whose reason is obscured by covetousness do not perceive the crime committed in destroying their own tribe, nor a sin in the oppression of their friends, should we not know how to recoil from such a sin—we, who look down upon the slaughter of one's tribe as a crime, O Janardana?<sup>45</sup> 38-39

40. "Madhusudana" is a name given to Krishna for his having killed the giant Madhu.

41. "The triple world" means heaven, earth and the underworld.

42. "Janardana" means Krishna.

43. The Kurus were guilty of practising six kinds of villainies against the Pandavas, viz., incendiarism, poisoning, throat-cutting, stealing, robbing land, and insulting wife.

44. "Madhava" means Krishna.

45. People unaware of the splendid records of Arjuna's military achievements might mistake this weakness of Arjuna for effeminacy. He shows his selflessness when he thinks more of his kinsmen and clan than of himself. The fallacy of his argument was the same that prompted the princes of his time to give up war and take to philosophy, not unlike the present argument of the "conscientious objector". When the soldier comes to be a philosopher, all order comes to an end. But even from the philosophic point of view Arjuna was wrong, because he was mistaken about the hierarchy of duties. The duty of the king to his country was superior to the duty to his clan, kinsmen or self. On no consideration whatsoever

In the destruction of a tribe, the eternal institutions of the tribe are destroyed. These institutions being destroyed lawlessness prevails throughout the whole tribe. 40

From the existence of lawlessness the women of the tribe become corrupted, Krishna, and when the women are corrupted, O Varshneya! confusion<sup>46</sup> of castes takes place. 41

Confusion of castes leads to hell both the destroyers of the tribe and the tribe itself, for their fathers are deprived of the rites<sup>47</sup> of the funeral cakes and libations of water and thus fall from heaven. 42

By the crimes of the destroyers of a tribe, and by those<sup>48</sup> who cause confusion of castes, the eternal institutions of castes and tribe are subverted. 43

could Arjuna justify his making over the administration of the country to the tender mercies of his villainous kinsmen. The only way he could do so was to renounce the world when he would be beyond the pale of the duties to his country. It was just this kind of renunciation that the author of the Geeta wanted to stop. True renunciation was the renunciation of the selfish desires, attachment to wordly goods. But of this anon. See p. 30, l. 17.

46. Fighting being restricted to one caste. viz., the Kshatriyas, a sudden great diminution in their number would by force of circumstances lead to inter-marriage between the different castes and thus cause blood mixture, which many nations at all ages have regarded as a most serious evil, but particularly those who like the Aryans, the Jews and the Scotch were at first surrounded by foreigners very different to themselves and thus preserved the distinction and genealogies of their races more effectively than any other.

47. See p. 21, l. 7.

48. The women who marry men of other castes.

We have heard that a sojourn in hell<sup>49</sup> necessarily awaits those who subvert the institutions of their tribe, O Krishna. 44

Alas! we have determined to commit a great crime, since, from the desire of sovereignty and pleasures, we are prepared to slay our own kin. 45

Better were it for me, if the Dhartarashtras, being armed would slay me, armless and unresisting, in the fight. 46

Sanjaya spoke:

Having thus spoken in the midst of the battle, Arjuna whose heart was troubled with grief, let fall his bow and arrows and sat down on the chariot. 47

*Thus ends the first chapter, called the Sorrow of Arjuna in the episode of Krishna-Arjuna in the science of Yoga of the Supreme Spirit in the Upanishads, called the Holy Lay of Bhagavat.*<sup>50</sup>

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49. The sojourns in hell and heaven are temporary and lasts according to the characters of the crimes and virtues. On the expiration of the allotted period, the souls have to be reborn on earth. See p. 11, l. 15.

50. A similar statement is made at the end of each chapter, which for the sake of economy will not be repeated.

## CHAPTER II

### SANKHYA

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Sanjaya spoke:

To him thus filled with compassion, with his troubled eyes full of tears and sunk in grief, Madhusudana spoke these words: 1

The Holy One spoke:

O Arjuna, how come you to have this delusion at this crisis, so unbefitting an Aryan and leading neither to heaven,<sup>1</sup> nor to glory? 2

O Partha, do not be unmanned. That does not become thee. Cast off this mean effminacy of heart and arise, O Parantapa.<sup>2</sup> 3

Arjuna spoke:

How should I, O Madhusudhana, contend in battle with my shafts against Bheeshma and Drona, both worthy to be honoured, Arisudana? 4

For it were better to eat even the bread of beggary<sup>3</sup> in this world, and not to slay these venerable men of great esteem. To kill these

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1. A soldier who falls fighting goes to heaven or wins glory, if he survives.

2. Conqueror.

3. Refers to renunciation, called *sannyasa*. The mention of beggary gives an opportunity to discuss the *Sankhya* philosophy of Kapila. It was only by turning a *sannyasi* that Arjuna could repudiate the duty to his caste.

venerable men, even though they are mercenaries,<sup>4</sup> would be eating of banquets smeared with blood. 5

Nor do we know which of these two would be the better for us that we conquer them, or they conquer us; those very men, the Dharta-rashtras whom if we slay we shall not wish to live ourselves, are drawn up opposite to us. 6

Through niggardliness and vice my natural wits are in a state of bankruptcy. I am under a delusion about my duties. Tell me for certain what I ought to do. I am thy disciple. Teach<sup>5</sup> me who now implore thee. 7

For I do not see how even the complete and unrivalled sovereignty of the earth and command over the gods can dispel my grief which parches my senses.<sup>6</sup> 8

Sanjaya spoke:

Gudakesha,<sup>7</sup> conqueror of his foes, thus addressed Krishna, and said to Govinda<sup>8</sup>: "I will not fight" and became silent. 9

Then between the two armies, Krishna smilingly addressed these words to him thus downcast:—

4. Bheeshma commanded the respect of all by his age, character and military abilities, and Drona as the preceptor, but both of them were mercenaries as they were in the pay of Dhritarashtra.

5. Arjuna now unreservedly places himself under the guidance of Krishna.

6. Senses here mean the organs of perception.

7. Conqueror of sleep.

8. Krishna.

The Holy One spoke :

Thou hast grieved for those who need not be grieved for, but thou utterest words of wisdom ! The wise<sup>9</sup> grieve not for the dead or living. 10-11

But never at any period did I, or thou, or these kings of men, not exist, nor shall any of us at any time henceforward cease to exist. 12

As the soul in this body undergoes the changes<sup>10</sup> of childhood, prime, and age, so it obtains a new body hereafter ; a sensible man is not troubled about that. 13

But the contacts of the senses with the objects, O Kaunteya, which bring cold and heat, pleasure and pain, which come and go, are temporary, these thou endure, O Bharata. 14

For that man whom, being the same in pleasure and pain, and ever constant, these elements do not afflict, O Purusharshava, is fitted for immortality.<sup>11</sup> 15

There is no existence for the unreal, nor is there any non-existence for the real. But even

9. The immortality of soul and the mortality of the body, *i.e.*, the distinction between matter and mind is thus brought forward.

10. The reference is to the doctrine of the transmigration of soul. In its broader sense it means evolution. See p. 28, l. 15.

11. Here the author introduces the chief doctrine of practical *Yoga*, the impassibility to be acquired towards all external influence and equanimity in regard to the internal influences of passion. The practice of *Yoga* by effecting union with the supreme spirit confers real immortality, since heaven and the gods must have an end.

of both of these, those who discern the truth perceive the true end.<sup>12</sup> 16

Know this, that that<sup>13</sup> by which all this universe is permeated is indestructible. No one can cause the destruction of this inexhaustible thing. 17

These finite bodies have been said to belong to an eternal and infinite<sup>14</sup> spirit. Therefore fight, O Bharata. 18

He who believes that this spirit can kill, and he who believes that it can be killed, both of these are wrong in judgment. 19

It neither kills, nor is killed. It is not born, nor dies at any time. It has had no origin, nor will it ever have an origin. Unborn, changeless, eternal both as to future and past time, it is not slain when the body is killed. 20

How can that man, O Partha, who knows that it is indestructible, constant, unborn and inexhaustible, really cause the death of any body or kill any body himself? 21

12. "True end" here means the realization of the truth about them. The idea is that the phenomenal world is not a reality. The basis of it is a reality. For instance, if it be true that the atom is nothing but two electrical charges, then the only thing that really exists is electricity. Everything else is unreal and an unreal thing cannot be called as something existing, while electricity can never be called as non-existing.

13. The basis of the universe is indestructible. It is the neuter, Brahma. The two electricities may indeed go out in a flash and destroy the phenomenal universe, but the electricity itself will not cease to exist and could always be developed again but not by unaided nature. Here we have to postulate another agency for the revival.

14. The infinite spirit is Brahma.



As a man abandons worn-out clothes, and takes other new ones, so does the soul quit worn-out bodies and enter other new ones. 22

Weapons cannot cleave it. Fire cannot burn it, nor can water wet it, nor can wind dry it. 23

It is uncleavable, incombustible, incapable of being wetted or dried. It is constant, present everywhere, firm, immovable and eternal. 24

It is said to be invisible, incomprehensible, immutable. Therefore, knowing it to be such, thou art not right to grieve for it. 25

And even if<sup>15</sup> thou deemest it born with the body and dying with the body, O Mahabaho, thou art not right to grieve for it. 26

For to everything born death is certain, to everything dead rebirth is certain. Therefore thou art not right to grieve for a thing which is inevitable.<sup>17</sup> 27

All things which exist are invisible<sup>18</sup> in their primeval state, visible in their intermediate state and again invisible in their final state. What cause is there for bewailing this? 28

15. The reference is to the doctrine of the transmigration of soul and the metaphor of clothes is an old one.

16. Here a new line of argument is taken up.

17. The reference is to the conservation of energy.

18. The reference is both to the body and to matter which are phenomenal only between the periods of creation and destruction which periodically happen. In the intermediate state it is the *Vyakta Prakriti*, the beginning and the end being *Avyakta Prakriti*. See p. 26, l. 14.

One looks on the soul as a miracle,<sup>19</sup> another speaks of it as a miracle, another hears of it as a miracle, but even when he has heard of it, not one comprehends it. 29

The soul<sup>20</sup> in every creature's body is always invulnerable. Therefore thou art not right to grieve for any one. 30

And considering thy own duty thou art not right to waver. For there is nothing better for a Kshatriya than lawful war.<sup>21</sup> 31

O Partha, happy<sup>22</sup> are the warriors who undertake such a war as is spontaneously offered—an open door to heaven. 32

But if thou wilt not join in this lawful fight, thou abandonest thine own duty and glory and contractest a crime.<sup>23</sup> 33

And mankind will, moreover, relate of thy imperishable infamy.<sup>24</sup> And to a nobleman infamy is worse than death. 34

19. The three kinds of people referred to here are: 1. The *Yogin* who says that he can see the soul. 2. The philosopher who philosophises on the soul. 3. The student who yet cannot quite comprehend it. The author merely points out the difficulty of comprehending the soul.

20. On the argument that the soul is invulnerable, it may be said that any body is free to kill any body and it did not matter who killed whom. Therefore the question of duty is introduced here. Duty prevents one from causing wanton destruction of life.

21. The Hindu believed in lawful war. They did not say that everything was fair in love and war. A soldier might legitimately refuse to engage in an unlawful war.

22. Refers to the belief that the soldier who dies on the battle-field is wafted directly to heaven.

23. The crime is against the duty or religion of his caste.

24. This is another line of argument in which appeal is made to the worldly wisdom, apart from religion, or philosophy, or ethics.

The great warriors will think that thou hast retired from the battle out of fear and thou wilt undergo the contempt of those by whom thou wast greatly esteemed. 35

And many abusive words will thy enemies utter sneering at thy prowess. What can be more wretched than that? 36

If slain thou wilt go to heaven, or if victorious thou wilt enjoy the earth. Therefore arise, O Kaunteya, make up thy mind for the fight. 37

Looking<sup>25</sup> on pleasure or pain, loss or gain victory or defeat as the same, gird thyself for the battle and thus thou wilt not incur sin. 38

This reasoning has been set before thee in accordance with *Sankhya* doctrine. Now hear it in accordance with *Karmayoga*<sup>26</sup> doctrine, imbued with that reasoning thou wilt discard the bonds<sup>27</sup> of action, O Partha. 39

In this *Karmayoga* there is no loss of, or detriment to one's efforts; even a little of this religious practice delivers one from great peril. 40

25. This is in accord with the *Sankhya*, but according to it also when a man reaches the ideal of viewing pain and pleasure as same he is to renounce the world. Therefore though *Sankhya* goes as far as making a man unattached to the world, this unattachment prevents him from fighting. Hence Arjuna's problem is not completely solved by it.

26. Therefore *Karmayoga* is here introduced which is the special doctrine of the Geeta.

27. See p. 34, l. 21.

O Kurunandana,<sup>28</sup> in this you must be single-purposed by discrimination.<sup>29</sup> Undiscriminating you will have countless different purposes. 41

The flowery speech that the unwise<sup>30</sup> utter, O Partha, clinging to the word of the Vedas, saying there is nothing else, ensouled by desire and longing after heaven, that offereth only rebirth as the fruit of action, that is full of various rites for the sake of enjoyments and sovereignty—the thought of those misled by that speech, cleaving to pleasures and lordship, not being inspired with resolution, is not engaged in contemplation. 42-44

O Arjuna, the Vedas are for those who<sup>31</sup> are not free from the impulses of *sattwa*, *raja* and *tama*. Be thou free from them. Be free from doubts and be self-possessed, untroubled by the acquirements and retention of properties, always reposing on *sattwa*. 45

28. The Pandavas were a branch of the Kurus, hence Arjuna is a descendant of the Kurus.

29. The practical life of a *karmayogin* necessitates the acceptance of an object in life to which all others must be subordinated. Difficulties must necessarily arise when there is more than one to consider. The object must be selected with a great deal of care.

30. The slur is on those who refuse to see the limitations of the *karmakanda* of the Vedas and not on the Vedas themselves. The purpose of the Vedas was to supplant first *tama* with *raja* and then *raja* with *sattwa*. They made people active instead of idle and also made them look up to heaven instead of to the earth but the Vedas could not lead to salvation.

31. True salvation was to get rid of the three *gunas*, viz., *sattwa*, *raja* and *tama*.

The enlightened<sup>32</sup> Brahmana has no more use for the Vedas than what any one has for a well when all the country is flooded. 46

You<sup>33</sup> are only entitled to work but never to its result. Never let the result be your motive, nor be eager to avoid work. 47

O Dhananjaya, work in union<sup>34</sup> with the divine, renouncing attachments and balanced evenly in success and failure. Equilibrium is *Yoga*. 48

O Dhananjaya, this equable state of mind is superior<sup>35</sup> to work. He who works with a desire in view is pitiable. 49

One with an equable mind on this earth, minds neither sin nor virtue. Therefore be a *Karmayogi*. Proficiency in work is *Karmayoga*. 50

The wise man with an equable mind discards the results of his work and reaches the domain<sup>36</sup>

32. When a Brahmana has received divine enlightenment, that is, when he has been able to realize God, the Vedas have nothing more to give him. Neither Kapila, nor the author of the Geeta has, however, repudiated the Vedas.

33. This is one of the most oft-quoted couplets of the Geeta. All we can do is to try our best. Our success does not depend on our own efforts alone. It depends on so many factors. Besides, it involves a psychological truth to which Freud has drawn our attention. We work best when we do not think too much of the result. "Ours is but to do and die. Ours is not to reason why." That is about the best that a soldier can say. After you have deliberately chosen a path, it is scarcely good halting in the middle to reconsider your choice.

34. *Yoga*.

35. This mental equipment is more difficult to attain than working.

36. Here he asserts for his system what is generally asserted at the outset in most Hindu philosophic maxims—the power of releasing their followers from the necessity of transmigration and ensuring final emancipation. It is the perfect beatitude.

where no sorrows dwell, and has not to be born again. 51

When thy mind transcends the mire of illusion, thou wilt mind neither what thou hast heard, nor what thou mayest yet hear.<sup>37</sup> 52

When thy mind distracted by all that thou hast learnt from the Vedas<sup>38</sup> becomes quiet and motionless in deep contemplation, then wilt thou attain *Yoga*. 53

Arjuna spoke :

How do you know the mentally steadfast,<sup>39</sup> deep in contemplation? How does he speak, dwell and walk? 54

O Partha, when a man banishes all desires from his mind and is satisfied in himself by himself, he is called mentally steadfast. 55

He whose mind is untroubled by sorrows and unattracted by pleasures and free from passion, fear and anger, and constant in meditation, is called a mentally steadfast *muni*.<sup>40</sup> 56

He whose mind has been detached from everywhere, and is neither sorry nor pleased to meet pains and pleasures as they come, is mentally steadfast. 57

37. These refer to the Vedas and the interpretations put on them by others, such as the *Mimansas* and *Vedanta*.

38. The mind must be purged of preconceived wrong ideas for the reception of truths that he is going to reveal.

39. The Sanskrit word for it is *Sthitaprajna*.

40. A *muni* is a saintly person who has through a course of meditation attained a state of semi-spiritualism.

He is mentally steadfast who draws in his senses<sup>41</sup> from the objects of sense, even as a tortoise draws in its limbs completely inside. 58

Though the man who fasts withdraw his sense-organs from food,<sup>42</sup> his desires still persist. It is only the realization<sup>43</sup> of God that can quench desires. 59

O Kaunteya, for often the agitated senses of a prudent man, even though he strives to subdue them, carry off his mind by violence.<sup>44</sup> 60

The mentally steadfast, controlling all the senses, becomes attached to me.<sup>45</sup> He is mentally steadfast whose senses are all under his control. 61

He who thinks of sensual gratification becomes attached to the senses. From this attachment come desires, and from desires comes anger.<sup>46</sup> 62

41. This is technically called *pratyahara*.

42 and 43. Fasting has been recommended by more than one religion as a means of purifying the body. The author of the Geeta seems to hold the view that too much fasting may be harmful. Anyway he is against any forcible subjection of the body. Men forced to fast have reacted by becoming greedy afterwards. The desires continue till man comes to realize God. Once he has tasted of that sublime happiness he forthwith ceases to care for any earthly happiness, but never before that.

44. The difficulty of controlling the sense-organs is here emphasised. Prudence, education, religious injunctions are by themselves insufficient to absolutely control the senses and desires. Such control can only come as a divine gift when man has tasted of the happiness that knows no surfeit. It is only the highest happiness that can quench the desire for the lower ones.

45. "Me" here means the Godhead. This is the first reference to the theism that follows later. Steadfastness in faith is the pre-requisite.

46. Any one may verify the truth of this if he analyses his own anger.

From anger comes delusion, from delusion, forgetfulness,<sup>47</sup> from forgetfulness comes indiscretion and from indiscretion, damnation.<sup>48</sup> 63

But he whose senses are under control, free from likes and dislikes, can yet be tranquil in the enjoyment of the sense-perceptions. 64

In this tranquillity<sup>49</sup> there springs up in him a separation from all troubles. For the mind of him whose thoughts are tranquil soon becomes steady. 65

The man who is not steadfast is neither discriminating<sup>50</sup> nor thoughtful. He who is not rational cannot have peace and how can one be happy without peace? 66

When a man's mind is after his roaming senses, it snatches away his steadfastness as the wind does a ship on the waves.<sup>51</sup> 67

Therefore, O Mahabahu, he is mentally steadfast whose senses are entirely withheld from objects of sense. 68

The *muni* whose senses are under control, is awake in that which is night<sup>52</sup> to all others;

47. "I forgot myself" is what we say when our better judgment shows our mistake.

48. Literally, extinction.

49. People who have tasted of this tranquillity would not exchange it for anything else. It is something like "the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest".

50. The steadfastness is the result of a rational choice.

51. "Passion-tossed" expresses the sense very well.

52. The difference between the two is due to the two different planes of consciousness.



that in which others are awake is night to him. 69

He into whom all desires enter as the waters enter the ocean<sup>53</sup> which nevertheless remains at the same level, remains peaceful but not the man who is full of desires. 70

The man who in his behaviour to others is desireless, selfless and unattached, obtains peace. 71

O Partha, that is the state of Brahma. Once you are there you can have no illusion. To die<sup>54</sup> in that state is salvation or union with the Supreme Being. 72

Thus ends, etc., .....*Sankhya Yoga.*

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53. The idea is that peace is not incompatible with work.

54. To be in that state at the time of death is to be in that state always because nobody knows when he will die.

## CHAPTER III

### KARMA (WORK)

Arjuna spoke : \*

O<sup>1</sup> Janardana, if knowledge be deemed by thee superior to action, why dost thou direct me to this dreadful deed, O Keshava? 1

Thou bewilderest<sup>2</sup> my mind by thy ambiguous words. Tell me, therefore, only one thing for certain by which I may profit. 2

The Holy One spoke :

I have already declared to thee, O sinless one, that there are two modes of life in this world—that of the *Sankhya* through spiritual knowledge and that of the followers of the *Karmayoga*<sup>3</sup> through work. 3

Abstention from work does not necessarily confer on you *naishkarmya*,<sup>4</sup> that is freedom from the fetters of action, nor can you by renouncing work attain perfection. 4

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1. Briefly, the line of argument followed in the last two chapters is this: The soul is eternal and death of the body is inevitable. The death of the body is, therefore, not regrettable. But that does not give us leave to kill anybody and everybody, because we have our duties to perform. In the performance of our duties we ought not to mind our pains and pleasures. This equable state of mind only can give us peace and happiness and is better than work. So Arjunā asks: "Why fight then?"

2. The argument is a bit confusing.

3. The *Karmayoga* is the special doctrine of the Geeta.

4. *Naishkarmya* literally means worklessness. It is to be understood here as that condition of mind or knowledge which deprives all work of its bondage or limitations.

For one cannot even for a single moment exist without doing some work. Our inborn nature<sup>5</sup> forces us always to do some kind of work. 6

The fool<sup>6</sup> who physically restraining the organs of action mentally contemplates the actions, is false to himself. 6

But he who unattached and mentally restraining his sense-organs, engages in *Karmayoga* his organs of action, is praiseworthy.<sup>7</sup> 7

Do thou regularly<sup>8</sup> work, for work is better than no work. Also thou canst not carry on the functions of the body without work. 8

In this world all work except that of offering sacrifices, binds<sup>9</sup> us in action. O 'Kaunteya,<sup>10</sup> do thou work for sacrifices but unattached.<sup>11</sup> 9

5. The Spirit or *Purusha* is an idle spectator who does no work. All the work that the body does, is the work of *Prakriti* or nature. Her laws are imperious. So the idea of determinism is there.

6. It is the hypocrite who conforms to the letter of the religion but disobeys the spirit on purpose. He is false to the religion. The fool mistakes the letter for the spirit. He deceives himself.

7. He is wise because he understands and practises the spirit of the religion and has the courage of his conviction to discard the letter. He is neither a fool nor a knave.

8. Perhaps 'regulated work' would better convey the meaning.

9. According to the *Mimamsa* the work of sacrifices does not bind.

10. Son of Kuntī.

11. But since the sacrifices are done with a desire, the fulfilment of the desire is binding. Hence the *Geeta* advises the performance of the sacrifices in a spirit of detachment which would nullify the bonds

The Creator, when of old He had created mortals together with the sacrifices, said to them: "By means of the sacrifice ye shall multiply. It shall be to you a cow<sup>12</sup> of plenty." 10

By means of it do ye support the gods, and let the gods support you. Supporting one another mutually, ye will obtain the highest felicity. 11

For being nourished by sacrifices the gods will grant you your desired enjoyments. He who eats the food given by them, without offering some to them first, is a thief<sup>13</sup> indeed. 12

Good men who eat what remains after the sacrifices, are liberated from all their sins but those bad men who cook for themselves only, eat sin. 13

Beings are nourished by food. Food has its origin from rain. Rain is the fruit<sup>14</sup> of sacrifice. Sacrifice has its origin in work. 14

Know that work proceeds from *Brahma*<sup>15</sup> or *Mula Prakriti*, and that again from the unchangeable principle, *Akshara*.<sup>16</sup> Therefore the

12. She could give a man all he could desire.

13. Not to pay for goods received is a kind of theft.

14. Sacrifice to the rain-god could cause rainfall.

15. Annotators differ as to the meaning of *Brahma* here. *Brahma* is often used in the sense of the absolute. In chapter III, Sl.14, it is said that *Brahma* is the organ of creation and is hence synonymous with nature or *Mula Prakriti*. In Chapters VII and VIII it has been said that *Prakriti* was God's expression. In this the *Geeta* differs from *Santhya* which makes both *Prakriti* and *Purusha* eternal.

16. *Akshara* is here synonymous with God, because *Prakriti* is derived from Him.

all-pervading *Brahma* is present in all efforts or *yajna*. 15

O Partha, he who in this world does not follow this revolving cycle,<sup>17</sup> leads a sinful life to no purpose, indulging in his senses. 16

But the man who delights in his own soul and finds both satisfaction and contentment in it has no work<sup>18</sup> left for him to do. 17

Thus in this world neither work, nor abstention from work, is of any moment to him. Neither, also, is his interest<sup>19</sup> attached to any created thing. 18

Therefore always, do thou perform thy *duteous*<sup>20</sup> work; for he who performs his duties unattached, attains the highest goal. 19

Janaka<sup>21</sup> and others in this way obtained their salvation through work. Even if thou only considerest the good of mankind thou shouldst work. 20

17. Of give and take.

18. The motive for all work is desire. The man without any desire has nothing to work for.

19. Since he is not attached to anything, he can have no preference for anything, either work or no work.

20. The idea of duty here is not exactly the categorical imperative. It is rational since it is based on the psychological fact that we do our duty best when the bargaining spirit is the least present.

21. Janaka was a king and a *rishi* or sage at the same time. He carried out all the duties of a king yet was a philosopher who had no attachment to worldly things. He was a contrast to those kings who turned philosophers and left the throne or kingdom, like Buddha and other princes of the time. The Geeta was a protest against such conduct. According to the Geeta, it was a

The ordinary man follows the example of the acknowledged superior. What he acknowledges as exemplary, the world follows. 21

O Partha, in the three worlds<sup>22</sup> I have nothing that I am obliged to do. Nor is there anything unobtainable by me which I want to obtain, yet I am constantly working. 22

O Partha, for if I were not to work continuously and indefatigably, all mankind would follow my example. 23

Were I to cease working, mankind would perish. And I should be destroying these men and be the author of confusion of castes. 24

Just as the unlettered people work from self-interest, so should the enlightened people work,

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dereliction of duty. By holding up Janaka as a model, the Geeta tells us that duties need not be divorced from religion. It is possible not only for the ordinary man but even for kings to do their duties without forsaking their religion. The bad example of the kings was no doubt followed by the people as is evident from what follows. If the advice given in the Geeta was followed, the fighting strength of India would not have been so weakened. What with the *sannyasism* of Kapila, the contemplationism of Buddha and the extreme compassionism of the Jainas, India was truly unmanned and the first advice that was given by Krishna to Arjuna, a Kshatriya, was "do not be unmanned". The burden of the song is 'fight', repeated at the end of each chapter, and the fight was to be clean, lawful, against unjust aggression, but never for self-aggrandisement and always from a sense of duty, with the good of mankind in view. You must fight, your nature will force you to fight. But there is something better even than fighting and that is what the Geeta tells us at the end.

22. Heaven, earth and the underworld which is however not the hell. The three worlds mean the universe.

but unattached and wishing to do good<sup>23</sup> to mankind. 25

The wise must not create misunderstanding<sup>24</sup> in the minds of the ignorant who work from self-interest. They should devoutly<sup>25</sup> work and make the people work gladly. 26

It is 'nature's qualities<sup>26</sup> working within us that incite us to work. The soul that is deluded by *ahankara*<sup>27</sup> thinks that it is he himself that is working. 27

But O Mahabahu, he who understands that the *gunas*<sup>28</sup> and the actions are different from him, is not attached because he knows that the whole thing is due<sup>29</sup> to the interplay of the senses and their objects. 28

23. People work from self-interest but the wise have the interest of mankind in view. Both work but the view-points are different.

24. The *Sankhya* philosophy was not for the masses who were too ignorant to understand the real meaning of renunciation. For the ordinary man renunciation was equivalent to a life of idleness and beggary. The real meaning of renunciation was the giving up of desires. When you have given up desires you need not work. The people who went in for *sannyasism* without understanding it were misled.

25. As a *yogin*.

26. The *gunas* - *sattwa*, *raja* and *tama*.

27. Consciousness of individuality as separate from the rest of the universe.

28. *Sattwa*, *raja* and *tama*.

29. The soul is inactive and it is *Prakriti* or nature that really works. *Prakriti* can work but without the *Purusha* or soul cannot sense. *Prakriti* is blind and the soul is lame, but their conjugation or combination has the effect of making us feel as if the body senses and the soul works which is the reverse of reality. The wise know the truth.

People deluded by nature's *gunas* are attached to the senses and their work. Let not the men who know all these mislead<sup>30</sup> the dull and ignorant people. 29.

Spiritually-minded, do thou trust<sup>31</sup> me for all thy actions and putting away all morbidness, fight, untrammelled by hopes and selfishness. 30

The faithful and non-fault-finding who always follow this my advice also transcend the bonds of action. 31

But know that those who finding fault with this my advice do not follow it are absolutely ignorant and spiritually<sup>32</sup> dead. 32

Even the wise man inclines towards that which agrees with his nature. All created things have to obey nature. Forcible subjugation can do but little.<sup>33</sup> 33

Our sense-organs have their natural likes and dislikes towards their objects. They<sup>34</sup> are our enemies. We should not submit<sup>35</sup> to them. 34

30. To be all-knowing is to be a *jnani* or *buddha*, according to *Sankhya* or *Buddha*. The religion of such men can only be well understood by the intelligent after a thorough education. The uneducated and ignorant are misled by it.

31. Literally, repose your actions on me. This is once again a reference to the wonderful theism that is the culmination of the *Geeta* and the sublimation of desires.

32. Enlightenment comes from the soul, for the body cannot see. The soul is dead that cannot see, capitulating to the body.

33. Nature's supremacy over the material body must be acknowledged.

34. The likes and dislikes.

35. The acknowledgment of the existence of enemies does not necessarily imply that we have to submit to them. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.



It is better to follow one's own religion even partially than to follow that of another fully. It is better to die in following one's own religion, but that of another is always dangerous.<sup>36</sup> 85

Arjuna spoke:

Instigated then by what does man incur sin even against his will, O Varshneya, impelled, as it were, by force?<sup>37</sup> 86

The Holy One spoke:

They are desire and anger, sprung from *raja*<sup>38</sup> *guna*, all-devouring and sinful. Know that they are the enemies in this world. 87

All the universe<sup>39</sup> is covered by them, as fire is by smoke, the mirror by dust and the foetus by the womb. 88

O son of Kunti, they are the constant enemies of the wise, engulfing all enlightenment, fiery and insatiable passions.<sup>40</sup> 89

The sense-organs, mind and intellect are their citadels. By involving wisdom they delude men. 40

36. This is another of the oft-quoted passages. Religion is here to be understood as the duties of one's profession. No good putting the square man in a round hole. Professional etiquette requires that you should not interfere in others' business. Let the priest be priest and the soldier, soldier.

37. It is a very pertinent question to ask what is the cause of such interference. What is the motive behind it?

38. Analysis shows that it comes from selfishness.

39. Selfishness is universal, embracing both animate and inanimate beings.

40. There is no end to our desires unless we control them.

Therefore do thou, O best of the Bharatas, restraining thy senses first, kill this sinful destroyer of *jnana*<sup>41</sup> and *vijnana*.<sup>42</sup> 41

The sense-organs are fine<sup>43</sup> but the mind is finer than they. *Buddhi* is finer than all these and that which is finer than even *buddhi* is the soul. 42

Understanding thus the soul<sup>44</sup> as superior to *buddhi* and restraining thy own self, do thou slay the intractable enemy in the guise of desires. 48

*Thus . . . . . Karmayoga.*

41 & 42. *Jnana* is knowledge and *vijnana* is specialised knowledge, science. This is the modern meaning of the two words but at the time of the Geeta real knowledge always meant spiritual knowledge.

43. See the genealogical tree of the 25 categories, page 25.

44. The acknowledgment of the authority of mind over matter, of the soul over the body.

## CHAPTER IV JNANA (KNOWLEDGE)

The Holy One spoke :

I delivered this imperishable *Karmayoga* to Vivaswat.<sup>1</sup> Vivaswat told it to Manu<sup>2</sup> and Manu told it to Ikshwaku.<sup>3</sup> 1

Thus the *rajarshis*<sup>4</sup> learnt it, handed down from one to another. During a considerable period of time, this doctrine had been lost<sup>5</sup> to the world, O Parantapa. 2

As thou art both my friend and worshipper, I have told you to-day this ancient doctrine, which is a very great secret. 3

Arjuna spoke :

Thy birth was posterior, that of Vivaswat was anterior. How do I know that thou didst tell him before? 4

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1. Having said in the foregoing chapter that work must be done but without attachment and from a sense of duty, with a view to the good of mankind, the Geeta wants to invest the *Karmayoga* with the authority that hoary antiquity gives. Vivaswat was the sun.

2 & 3. Manu was the father of Ikshwaku.

4. The other sages.

5. The four Hindu ages are *satya*, *treta*, *dwapara* and *kali* which is the present age. The ages were probably separated by destructive floods or upheavals which accounted for the loss of the doctrine. It would appear from other records that Vivaswat gave this doctrine to Manu in the beginning of *treta*, and the *Kuru-Pandava* war was at the end of *dwapara*. \*

The Holy One spoke :

I and thou, O Parantapa, have passed through many transmigrations. I know all these. Thou dost not know them, O Arjuna. 5

Even though I am unborn, eternal and the lord of all that exists, yet, residing<sup>6</sup> in my own nature I am born by my own mystic<sup>7</sup> power. 6

For<sup>8</sup> whenever religion comes to be tainted, O Bharata, and irreligion comes into being, I am born. 7

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6 & 7. According to *Sankhya*, *Prakriti* and *Purusha* were separate and eternal but according to the *Geeta*, *Prakriti* is God's expression; so nature is a part of God and hence it is possible for God to manifest Himself in the material body. This He does by the mystic power of creation, called *maya*.

8. This and the next sloka are also amongst the oft-quoted passages. The *avatars* or the incarnations of God appear when the world is troubled greatly by a powerful miscreant who defies the law and order of God. The prophets are born just when the world needs them most, as if the necessity mothered the invention. At the bottom of it is the law of action and reaction which science recognizes but cannot account for. This law of action and reaction governs not only the animate and inanimate worlds but also society, politics, economics, etc. Neither science, nor philosophy, nor religion has paid much attention to this law. The study of this law may one day give us direct evidence of a directing Providence which has upto now been a matter of faith. That great man, Hahnemann, who applied this law to the healing art most successfully, prophesied "nations like the Germans, who have for centuries been gradually sinking deeper and deeper in soulless apathy and degrading serfdom, must first be trodden still deeper in the dust by the Western Conqueror, until their situation became intolerable." Modern Germany is the reaction. A Hitler is required to offset a Bonaparte. But the offsetting does not stop the eternal waves of action and reaction and prevent the sea of life coming to a rest, for that would be the death of the world. World work requires such action and reaction and it is only when the waves are badly timed and come to a head, that they cause one of those cataclysmic upheavals that necessitate divine intervention.

To succour the pious, to destroy the evildoers and to re-establish religion, I am reborn age after age. 8

O Arjuna, he who thus truly comprehends my divine birth and action has not to be reborn after quitting this body but is absorbed<sup>9</sup> in me. 9

Many, freed from attachment, fear and anger, devoted to me, and taking refuge in me, purified by knowledge and asceticism, have entered my being. 10

Whatever be the modes of worship different men follow, I grant each man what<sup>10</sup> he prays for. In every way they follow my path,<sup>11</sup> O Partha. 11

Desiring success for their actions, worshipping the gods in this world, men quickly<sup>12</sup> succeed by their sacrifices. 12

I instituted the four castes, classifying men according to their nature and work. Though I have instituted them, I am not really their author,<sup>13</sup> I the eternal. 13

My work does not bind<sup>14</sup> me, nor am I attached to the results of my work. He who knows me, thus is himself not bound by his action. 14

9. The final emancipation.

10. No sincere prayer offered in good faith is futile.

11. All roads lead to Rome. The end of all religion is God. It is this catholicity that has endeared the religion of the Geeta to so many. But the question has to be answered why different people follow different paths. And the Geeta does so.

12. The worship of the gods of nature that the scientists do is met with quick success but it is short-lived, because it does not solve the bigger problems of life. Success here is worldly success.

13. It is disinterested or spiritual work.

14. The bond comes from the attachment. No attachment, no bond.

The ancients,<sup>15</sup> knowing this, worked for their salvation. Do thou, therefore, work as the ancients did. 15

Even<sup>16</sup> the sages have erred in deciding what is work and what is not. I will therefore tell you what work is, knowing which, thou wilt be spared from evil. 16

Action, inaction and wrong action, each has to be well understood. Inscrutable are the ways of action. 17

He<sup>17</sup> who sees action in inaction and inaction in action, is the wise one amongst men. He is devoted and performs all his duties. 18

Him the learned call wise whose efforts are all without desire for the result and whose actions are purified<sup>18</sup> by the fire of knowledge. 19

15. Work therefore is not a hindrance to emancipation, as the *sannyasi* would say.

16. The reference is to the conflicting opinions on *karma*. According to the followers of *sannyas* all *karma* or work, or sacrifice, is bad and ought to be given up, because all actions have some defects and therefore bind and stand in the way of emancipation. The followers of the Vedas say that the work of the Vedic sacrifices does not bind. The Geeta says that they too bind when they are done with a specific purpose, and it is impossible to be absolutely without work. Therefore we should work and offer sacrifice but unattached, from a sense of duty, unmindful of the result. Action is due to the *raja guna* which makes us work through our desires. Inaction is due to *sattwa guna* because it springs from a desire for emancipation. Wrong action is due to *tama guna* because it springs from ignorance.

17. The *karmayogi* who accepts the Geeta creed has no objection to doing any work, hence he does all kinds of work.

18. The knowledge that work done without expectation is tantamount to inaction is what purifies action into inaction.

He who is unattached to the result of his action, always contented and unattached, really does no work<sup>19</sup> though engaged in every way in work. 20

He who, without expectation, restraining his mind and abandoning all possessions,<sup>20</sup> lets only his limbs work, does not incur sin. 21

Contented with what he receives unsought, free from antagonism, without envy, the same in success and failure, even though he works, he does not incur the bonds of action.<sup>21</sup> 22

He who is unattached, unfettered, equable in mind through spiritual knowledge and only works for sacrifice, dissolves away all<sup>22</sup> the bonds of action. 23

*Brahma*<sup>23</sup> is the offering. *Brahma* is the offered thing. *Brahma* is he who makes the offering. Therefore he to whom all sacrifice is *Brahma*, attains *Brahma*. 24

19. Because his activity is tantamount to inactivity.

20. Does not necessarily mean *sannyasa*.

21. See Chapter III, Sl. 9.

22. According to the *mimamsakas* the work of sacrifice does not bind but merits heaven. According to the Geeta even meriting heaven is a kind of bondage. The aim of the Geeta is *moksha* or emancipation for which even heaven has to be sacrificed.

23. Before one can be fit to be absorbed in the Supreme Spirit, he has to acquire the spiritual outlook and identify everything with the Supreme Spirit. Here are described the sacrifices that are done without expectation. In the next, sacrifice with expectation is described.

Some *yogis* offer sacrifices to the gods;<sup>24</sup> and others offer the sacrifice itself as an offering to the fire of *Brahma*.<sup>25</sup> 25

Some sacrifice the sense<sup>26</sup> of hearing and other senses, in the fire of restraint,<sup>27</sup> others offer the sense-objects, such as sound, in the fire of the senses.<sup>28</sup> 26

Others sacrifice all their sense-actions and vital actions in the sacrificial fire of self-restraint, enkindled by spiritual knowledge.<sup>29</sup> 27

Thus the different severe ascetics offer as sacrifices material things or *tapa*,<sup>30</sup> or *yoga*,<sup>31</sup> or daily worship,<sup>32</sup> or spiritual knowledge.<sup>33</sup> 28

Others proficient in *pranayama*,<sup>34</sup> sacrifice inspiration<sup>35</sup> of breath in expiration and expiration<sup>36</sup> in inspiration, by restraining both. 29

24. These are not without expectations.

25. The reference here is to Rigveda 10, 90, 16, which describes the great sacrifice of the *Virata Purusha* by the gods at the beginning of creation. The sense is that since the Supreme Spirit pervades everything, all sacrifice is the sacrifice of *Brahma*. Having spoken of the God's sacrifice, the author is now going to speak of the *yoga* practice according to Patanjali which is also a kind of sacrifice.

26 & 27. This is a poetical way of expressing the act of self-control.

28. This is starving the sense-organs.

29. As is evident from *Manusmriti* this new meaning or *yajna* came into use before the time of the Geeta.

30, 31, 32 & 33. Every means of salvation being a *yajna*, all these could be called sacrifices.

34. These are the deep-breathing exercises of Patanjali.

35. Technically called *poorak* or filling up.

36. Technically called *rechak* or dilating. The inspired breath is called *apan* and the expired, *pran*. Both may be effected by alternately blocking one of the nostrils. Sacrifice here is to be taken in the general sense of means of salvation.



Others sacrifice their vital<sup>37</sup> energy by regulating food in the fire of life. All of these being proficient in sacrifice have their sins<sup>38</sup> destroyed by their sacrifices. 30

Those who eat of the ambrosia<sup>39</sup> left from a sacrifice pass into the eternal Supreme Spirit. Those who do not offer sacrifice, O best of Kurus, cannot succeed in this world. How can they in the next? 31

Sacrifices of so many kinds are performed in the presence<sup>40</sup> of *Brahma*. Know that all of them spring from action. Knowing<sup>41</sup> this thou wilt be emancipated. 32

O Parantapa, sacrifice by knowledge<sup>42</sup> is better than the sacrifice of material things. Because, O Partha, all work, without exception, leads in the end to knowledge.<sup>43</sup> 33

37. The regulation of food was a part of self-control.

38. The idea underlying all these is that for the common good of mankind we have to sacrifice both our personal liberty and predilections, for which both mental and bodily training are necessary. And these training and sacrifices as means of salvation could be called *yajna*. They purify our body and mind.

39. Refers to the practice of eating the remnants of *yajna*.

40. Literally, mouth. Fire is the mouth of the gods. In reality all sacrifices are offered to the Supreme Spirit.

41. The *mimamsakas*' idea of offering sacrifices to the gods is restricted. To see in all sacrifices the sacrifice to the Supreme Spirit is the real knowledge.

42. The acquisition of knowledge as a means of salvation is a *yajna*.

43. The knowledge of experience as opposed to book-knowledge.

Acquire this knowledge by humbly approaching,<sup>44</sup> inquiring<sup>45</sup> of and serving<sup>46</sup> the wise who know the real truth and will teach you. 84

Knowing which, O Pandava, thou wilt not again be deluded, and by which knowledge thou wilt see all created beings in self and in me.<sup>47</sup> 85

Even if thou wert the most sinful<sup>48</sup> of all sinners thou wouldest cross over all sins in the bark of spiritual knowledge. 86

As fire when kindled, reduces fuel to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge burn to ashes all actions.<sup>49</sup> 87

For there is no purifier in the world like knowledge; he who has succeeded by *Karmayoga*, in time finds that self-knowledge<sup>50</sup> without effort in himself. 88

44, 45 & 46. The teacher who does not command respect is not believed in. The student must acknowledge the authority of his teacher. No one can learn if he has not the spirit of inquiry. As no fees were paid by students in those days, personal service was paid in lieu thereof.

47. This idea will again be expressed in Chapter VI, Sl. 29. The soul in all created beings is a part of God. The realization of this is the highest position that man can attain which makes us all wonderfully akin.

48. At the bottom of all sins, all sufferings, lies ignorance. That was what Kapila preached and his remedy for everything was knowledge. In all that follows this we see the influence of Kapila.

49. The bonds of action, both physical and psychical.

50. This knowledge is self-acquired through work undertaken without any expectation. In the next sloka the author says how the knowledge can be gained by those who cannot acquire it without help. It can be gained by faith under proper tuition.

The man of faith,<sup>51</sup> the man of self-restraint and devotion will get knowledge. After acquiring that knowledge he soon attains the supreme tranquillity. 39.

The ignorant, unfaithful and doubtful, perish. He who hesitates loses not only this world and the next but also beatitude.<sup>52</sup> 40.

The man who hath renounced action by *yoga*, whose doubts hath been dispersed by knowledge and who is ruled by his soul cannot be bound by his action,<sup>53</sup> O Dhananjaya. 41

Therefore, sever this doubt that springs from ignorance and is in thy heart, with thy sword of knowledge and relying on *yoga*, arise, O Bharata. 42

*Thus. . . . Jnana-Karma-Sannyasa-Yoga.*

51. It is only a fortunate few who can acquire this knowledge by themselves. For the great majority of mankind the royal road is through faith under expert guidance, earnestly followed with self-control.

52. The supreme happiness that knows no surfeit is impossible without faith. The Geeta holds out hope even for the greatest sinner but it holds out no hope for those who cannot have faith.

53. Knowledge is good, work is necessary to acquire knowledge, but as work binds, the bonds should be cut through by *sannyasa*, that is, working without expectation. Therefore, the three, knowledge, work and disinterestedness should be combined.

## CHAPTER V

### SANNYASA (RENUNCIATION)

Arjuna spoke :

Thou praisest, O Krishna, once the renunciation of work and again *Karmayoga*. Tell me for certain that one only which is the better of the two.<sup>1</sup> 1

The Holy One spoke :

Both renunciation and *Karmayoga* are means to the final emancipation but of these two, *Karmayoga* is of more special merit than renunciation.<sup>2</sup> 2

Know that he who hates none and desires nothing is always a renouncer, *sannyasi*; for he who is free from the opposing influences, gets rid of the bonds with ease.<sup>3</sup> 3

Boys and not wise men speak of *Sankhya* and *Karmayoga* as different. Completely established in one of them, one can reap the fruits of both.<sup>4</sup> 4

---

1. If work results in knowledge (4.33), if knowledge nullifies all bonds of work (4.37), and if knowledge is better than the sacrifice of material things, why was Arjuna again asked to fight? The answer given is that knowledge is necessary to dispel doubts and to attain *moksha*, and work is necessary for the good of mankind. The *via regia* for *moksha* according to *Sankhya* is knowledge and according to *Karmayoga*, work. Arjuna now asks "which of the two is the better"?

2. The Geeta gives preference to *Karmayoga*.

3. The real point is not what you call yourself but what you really are. You may do anything, provided you are not actuated by hatred or selfishness.

4. Thoughtful men will see that *Sankhya* and *Karmayoga* are really not different. The difference is superficial.

What position can be gained through *Sankhya* can also be gained through *yoga*. He who views both *Sankhya* and *yoga* as the same has the true insight.<sup>5</sup> 5

But, O Mahabahu, renunciation is difficult to obtain without *yoga*. The *muni* who is in *yoga* reaches *Brahma* in no time.<sup>6</sup> 6

He who is in *yoga*, whose soul is purified, who has subdued himself and his senses,<sup>7</sup> who in his own soul<sup>8</sup> has merged the soul of all created beings, even though working, is unattached. 7

The *yogi* who knows the divine truth<sup>9</sup> should think, "I am doing nothing" whether he looks, hears, touches, smells, eats, walks, sleeps or breathes; or even when he speaks, lets go or takes, opens or shuts his eyes, imagining that the senses must be after their objects. 8-9

5. Because they both lead to emancipation.

6. In Chapters VII-XVII, it has been elaborately explained that the *moksha* that is obtained by *Sankhya* is also obtained by *karma*. But *Karmayoga* is the easier means.

7 & 8. The follower of *Sankhya* abjures work because work binds us to this earth and stands in the way of emancipation. But analysis shows that the bondage arises from license and selfishness. So, if a man has full control of himself and is able to realise in his own soul that of others, that is, can fully sympathise with the pains and pleasures of others, he can neither take license, nor be selfish. Working selflessly, one does not become attached to the world and therefore has no hindrance to emancipation.

9. The truth is that the soul is a disinterested spectator. All our bodies' physical and physiological actions follow the law of nature. This disinterested attitude of the mind is the best guarantee against bondage.

He who works without attachment, resigning all work to *Brahma*, is not touched by sin, even as a lotus<sup>10</sup> leaf is not by water. 10

Unattached and for the sake of purification, the *karmayogis* work using their bodies, minds, *buddhi* and the senses merely<sup>11</sup> as instruments. 11

The *yogi* disregarding the fruits of his work obtains lasting tranquillity. He who is not a *yogi* is bound, being compelled to action by his desire and attached to the result.<sup>12</sup> 12

Renouncing all actions mentally, the self-subdued man rests happy, doing nothing, nor causing anything to be done in his body that is like a nine-doored<sup>13</sup> city. 13

The Lord<sup>1</sup> does not create man's authority,<sup>14</sup> or the work, nor links his action to its fruits. It is nature which does so. 14

10. In English the idea is expressed by 'like water on a duck's back'.

11. The body, mind, *buddhi* and the senses belong to *Prakriti* or nature and not to the soul. So long as the soul remembers this distinction, it remains disinterested in their actions as agents.

12. It is the desire for the result that creates the interest and acts as a bondage.

13. The nine doors of the body are the two eyes, two nostrils, two ears, the mouth and the two passages for the solid and liquid excreta.

14. Consciousness of self as the person who does the work. The idea in this and the next sloka is that of *Sankhya*. See p. 25, l. 18. *Ahankara*, *karmendriya*, *jnanendriya* are derived from *Prakriti* and obey the law of nature. *Purusha*, or God does not interfere in that work of nature.

The Lord receives nobody's sin or virtue.<sup>15</sup>  
 Beings are deluded by their ignorance that bars knowledge.<sup>16</sup> 15

But to them in whose souls ignorance has been destroyed by knowledge, the divine knowledge discovers itself like the light<sup>17</sup> of the sun. 16

And those whose minds are lit up by that divine knowledge, whose souls are in it, who exist<sup>18</sup> in it and are deeply interested in it, and solely devoted to it cease to transmigrate,<sup>19</sup> their sins having been washed by their knowledge. 17

The wise view the learned *Brahman* who is yet modest,<sup>20</sup> the cow, the elephant, the dog and the *Chandal*<sup>21</sup> as the same. 18

Those whose minds are so<sup>22</sup> equable, conquer this world even in their this body. Being

15. Hence God has no direct responsibility for man's sins or virtues.

16. It is the want of this knowledge that causes the delusion.

17. As clearly as daylight.

18. Poetical expression for complete understanding.

19. Emancipation follows perfect knowledge and hence transmigration ceases.

20. According to the caste system, the *Brahman's* position was superior to that of the King's. A learned *Brahman* was more respectable, and a *Brahman* who was learned and was yet modest was the most respectable.

21. The *Chandal* was the lowest in social position. The cow though an animal was sacred. The elephant though the biggest animal was not sacred, while the dog was the lowest among animals. To know that each of them is the product of nature is to acknowledge a common origin and spirit.

22. That is those who see no difference between the highest and lowest are *jeevanmuktas* or emancipated before death.

unimpeachable<sup>23</sup> and equable like *Brahma*, they therefore come<sup>24</sup> to be identified with *Brahma*. 19

He who is not elated when he gets the object of his desire, nor worried when he gets what he does not desire, who is undeluded<sup>25</sup> and steady<sup>26</sup> in his mind and has divine knowledge, is identified with the Supreme Being. 20

The soul that is not attached to the external<sup>27</sup> sense-perception, finds happiness in himself, and afterwards his soul, joined<sup>28</sup> in *yoga* to *Brahma*, enjoys eternal happiness. 21

The enjoyments that spring from external sense-perceptions have a beginning<sup>29</sup> and an end and therefore result in pain. O Kaunteya, the wise do not take pleasure<sup>30</sup> in them. 22

He who can resist, even in this life, the impulse arising from desire and anger, before the

23. Literally, faultless.

24. To have the attributes of God is to be at one with him. To be impartial and sinless is to be like God.

25. Delusion is the result of ignorance.

26. He who has perfect knowledge does not waver.

27. Material happiness comes from the material part of us and having been derived from *Prakriti* or nature follows the law of nature. The soul becomes dependent on matter when it cares for such happiness. Spiritual happiness is the soul's own happiness, independent of matter.

28. To be spiritually joined to the Supreme Being or *Brahma*, is to merge one's self-consciousness in the universal consciousness.

29. That is, temporary, and therefore causes pain by disappointing.

30. 'Do not take pleasure' is to be understood as 'do not care'.



liberation of the soul from the body, is a *yogi*<sup>31</sup> and a happy man. 23

The *yogi* who is happy at heart, internally<sup>32</sup> at ease, and is internally illumined, partaking<sup>33</sup> of the nature of *Brahma*, is extinguished<sup>34</sup> in it. 24

Those *rishis* whose sins have vanished, who have sundered their doubts, who are self-governed and are working for the good of mankind, obtain extinction<sup>35</sup> in *Brahma*. 25

Divested of desire and anger, self-governed, knowing their own souls, the self-restrained obtain extinction in *Brahma*, alive<sup>36</sup> or dead. 26

He who excluding the external contacts, confines his gaze to the space between the two brows,<sup>37</sup> equalizes<sup>38</sup> inspiration and expiration restrains his senses, heart and thoughts, bereft of desire and anger, intent on emancipation, is indeed always emancipated. 27-8

He who knows me as the Lord of all the worlds, to whom all sacrifices<sup>39</sup> and mortifications<sup>40</sup>

31. To be equable in mind is to be a *yogi*.

32. The supremacy of mind over matter is emphasised here. It is something like "mind in its own place, what matter where?"

33 & 34. To partake of the nature of the *Brahma* or Supreme Being is to be identified with Him, and to be identified with Him is to lose oneself in Him.

35. Same as to be extinguished in Him.

36. That is, always.

37. Refers to the practice of *yoga*.

38. Technically called *kumbhaka*.

39. *Yajna*.

40. *Tapa*.

are offered and who is the friend<sup>41</sup> of all created beings, obtains tranquillity.<sup>42</sup> 29

*Thus.....Sannyasayoga.*

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41 & 42. The conviction that God is the friend of all is bound to bring in peace and contentedness. The real meaning is, whether you follow the *Vedic* practices or *Sannyasa*, really does not matter much, so long as you remember that your real object is the worship of God, the Supreme Being of the universe, who is kindly to all and impartial. To understand this is to do away with sectarian conflict and heartburning.

## CHAPTER VI

### DHYANA (CONTEMPLATION)

The Holy One spoke:

He who, not depending on the result of his work, does his duty, is both a *sannyasi* and a *yogi*, not he who kindles<sup>1</sup> no sacrificial fire and performs<sup>2</sup> no ceremonies. 1

Know, O son of Pandu, that which is called *sannyasa* is *yoga*. For, no one can be a *yogi* without renouncing desire-impelled determination<sup>3</sup>, that is, expectation of the result. 2

To a *muni* who wants to attain *yoga*, work<sup>4</sup> is the means. After he attains *yoga*, equanimity<sup>5</sup> becomes his means. 3

---

The wise and the emancipated even should work for the good of mankind but without expectation. The great enemies are the desires and anger; so control the senses. The *yoga* practices that help in getting such control are the subjects of this chapter.

1. Every householder had to keep up the sacrificial fire. When he turns a *sannyasi*, he leaves his home and that fire.

2. The *sannyasi* not only leaves the sacrificial fire but gives up sacrificing.

3. Used in the sense of purpose.

4. The meaning of this sloka is disputed. It is contended that *Karmayoga* is preliminary to *sannyasa*. Therefore, it is by work that a man attains *yoga* but after attaining *yoga*, work is to be substituted by equanimity, and equanimity has been called *yoga*. But this interpretation is against the whole of the Geeta which advocates *Karmayoga* throughout. The chapter begins by saying that he who does his duty without expectation is a *yogi*. Therefore equanimity here does not mean cessation of work but equanimity of mind.

5. To lose equanimity is to lose *yoga*.

For, when he is attached neither to the objects of the senses, nor to actions and has renounced all determinations,<sup>6</sup> he attains *yoga*. 4

One must work out the emancipation of his own soul and prevent its downfall. A man's soul is his friend as well as his enemy. 5

He who has subdued his self by his own soul, is a friend to his own soul, but he who does not know his own self behaves as if he were his own enemy.<sup>7</sup> 6

He whose mind is unaffected by heat or cold, pleasure or pain, honour or dishonour and who has subdued his heart, rests in the absolute self.<sup>8</sup> 7

The *yogi* whose soul has been satisfied by the acquisition of knowledge, general and special, who has subdued his senses and has reached the fundamentals,<sup>9</sup> and views gold, earth and stone as same, is attuned. 8

He who is of the same mind to friends, allies, enemies, to the indifferent<sup>10</sup> and to the

6. Set purpose.

7. In these two slokas the independence of the soul has been proclaimed. There is no fixed fate, there is free will. The matter of the body has to follow the laws of nature and even the thought processes but not the soul which is free. See law of indeterminacy, p. 7, l. 22.

8. The heart feels and through the heart the soul feels. If the heart can inhibit feeling, the soul becomes tranquil.

9. The roots.

10. The 'indifferent' does not care whether either party gains or loses. The 'neutral' cares but does not interfere.

neutral, to aliens and relatives, to the saints and the sinners, is of special merit.<sup>11</sup> 9

A *yogi* should always practise *yoga*, remaining in seclusion and solitude, restraining his mind and soul, giving up all desire and greed.<sup>12</sup> 10

Taking his motionless seat on an undefiled spot, not too high or low, covered with *kusha* grass, deer-skin and cloth, fixing his mind on one object, restraining his senses, thoughts and actions, he should practise *yoga* for the purification<sup>13</sup> of his soul. 11-12

Holding his body, head and neck, all in a line, immovable, firmly seated, regarding the tip of his nose, and not looking around in different directions, the *yogi* should remain quiet, with passionless soul free from anxiety, tranquil in soul, practising *brahmacharyya*,<sup>14</sup> meditating<sup>15</sup> and intent on Me. 13-14

The *yogi* who always<sup>16</sup> thus exercises himself, restraining his mind, attains to that tranquillity,

11. Having said what a *yogi* ought to be, he is going to say what practices are necessary for success.

12. The reference is evidently to *Patanjali-sutras*. In the initial period these rules are to be followed by the beginner for attaining success, but they are not the end, only the means.

13. The object of *yoga* is purification of soul. It is a means and not an end. The end can be obtained by other means too.

14. The *brahmachari* has to strictly follow certain rules of action.

15. The real object is God. So the mind should intently think of Him.

16. The meaning is not that *yoga* should be always practised but that whenever *yoga* is practised, it should be done in the way here described.

the Supreme extinction, which is conjunction with Me. 15.

He who eats too much, or does not eat at all, who sleeps too long or keeps awake too long cannot have *yoga*,<sup>17</sup> O Arjuna. 16.

*Yoga* beguiles the suffering of him who is moderate in his food and recreation, moderate in his exertion when working, and moderate in his sleeping and keeping awake.<sup>18</sup> 17

When his regulated mind becomes steadfast in himself and indifferent to all desires, he is then called a *yukta*.<sup>19</sup> 18.

The *yogi* of restrained thoughts, practising his *yoga*, is like a candle unflickering in a windless place. 19.

In that state in which the mind subdued by the practice of *yoga* finds peace; in which the soul is satisfied by viewing<sup>20</sup> itself; 20.

in which state it experiences that extreme<sup>21</sup> bliss that is beyond the senses and can only be realized

17. The sense is that *yoga* is impossible for one who cannot live a regulated life.

18. Almost a repetition of the preceding sloka.

19. *Yukta* means "attuned".

20. For the soul to be satisfied in itself is to be independent of the material body. The doctrine that happiness is possible without material prosperity is peculiarly Indian. See p. 1, l. 12.

21. This extreme bliss is independent of matter, hence the senses do not take part in it, but only the mind.

by *buddhi*, and remaining in which he does not deviate from the fundamental<sup>22</sup> truth; 21

and after gaining which no other<sup>23</sup> gain appears greater; remaining in which he is not affected even by severe pain; 22

know that that state, bereft of the touch of pain is called *yoga*<sup>24</sup> which should be practised with firm conviction and an undependent mind. 23

Discarding completely all desires that spring from imagination,<sup>25</sup> inhibiting all round the sense-perceptions of the mind, gradually becoming passive by reasoned<sup>26</sup> will, stationing his mind on his soul, he should think of nothing else. 24-25

Keeping<sup>27</sup> back the restless and unsteady mind from wandering anywhere it would, he should bring it under control. 26

22. Reality. Our sense-perceptions are unreal. What is nothing but only one kind of energy appears to us differently as solids, liquids, gases, etc. That is the illusion.

23. Once a man has tasted of this tranquil bliss, he ceases to care for any earthly happiness or even unhappiness.

24. '*Yoga*', according to Patanjali yoga-sutra, is control of the mind. The perfection of this control is called *samadhi*. *Samadhi*, however, does not depend simply on this control of the mind though it is the pre-requisite. It really depends on our ability to discover in us our own soul. This painless existence has been variously designated as *Brahmananda*, *Atmananda* etc. This painless bliss can, however, be gained otherwise than through *yoga*, as by worshipful philosophy or knowledge. How *samadhi* is to be obtained by *yoga* will now be said.

25. That is, illusory.

26. It really is the super-imposition of mind over matter.

27. This has been aptly compared to the control of "restless chariot-horses."

Because the *yogi* who is sinless, tranquil in mind, in whom the *rajaguna* is laid at rest and who has attained *Brahma*, enjoys the best of happiness.<sup>28</sup> 27

The sinless *yogi* always thus attuning his self easily attains that extremity of happiness that comes from contact with the Supreme<sup>29</sup> Being. 28

The soul that is in *yoga*, whose self embraces the whole of creation, viewing everything everywhere as same, sees the whole universe in himself.<sup>30</sup> 29

He who sees everything in Me and Me everywhere, I shall never be away from him, nor he from Me.<sup>31</sup> 30

He who worships Me who am everywhere, as the all-pervading One, is in Me, whatever his mode of living. 31

O Arjuna, he is considered as the most excellent *yogi* who views everywhere in every

28. This best of happiness is impossible for sinful men who cannot feel others' pain as their own.

29. The basis of this happiness is contact or inter-communication with the Supreme Being of which our souls are only tiny portions. This wireless communication is impossible in the presence of enemy-jamming. Therefore broaden your mind so as to embrace the whole universe.

30. Follows from 9.

31. That is the salvation. The individual soul, initially separated from the parent stock of *Paramatma* or Supreme Being to do the world work, after transmigrating through the whole world of experience, from the lowest existence to the highest, loses his own self-interest and substitutes that of the universe for his own and thus becomes one or merges with the *Brahma*.



person everything, be it pain or pleasure, as the same by comparison with his own.<sup>32</sup> 32

Arjuna spoke:

O Madhusudana, this *yoga* of which you have spoken as equanimity of mind, because of the instability of mind I cannot imagine how it can last long. 33

O Krishna, as the mind is unstable, liable to be agitated, difficult to be controlled or moved, I believe the restraint of it to be as difficult as that of the wind.<sup>33</sup> 34

The Holy One spoke:

Doubtless, O Mahabahu, the mind is unstable and difficult to restrain, but it may be restrained, O Kaunteya, by practice and renunciation.<sup>34</sup> 35

It is my opinion that for one not self-restrained, *yoga* is difficult to attain, but it can be obtained by the self-restrained by application using proper means.<sup>35</sup> 36

Arjuna spoke:

O Krishna, what is the fate of the slacker, who, though endowed with faith, fails to gain

32. Slokas 31 and 32 elaborate the same idea as is expressed in sloka 30.

33. Arjuna points out the difficulty of gaining such control over the mind.

34. The difficulty is admitted. It is certainly no easy matter to gain such control over the mind. But the mind can be trained by practice just as the body.

35. Patience, perseverance and proper guidance can accomplish much.

success in *yoga* because his mind wanders from it ?<sup>36</sup> 87

O Mahabahu Shree Krishna, does not he perish on his way to *Brahma*, deluded, with no foothold<sup>37</sup> anywhere, missing both, like the fragment of a cloud? 88

O Krishna, thou shouldest completely dispel this doubt of mine, for no one else can dispel this doubt.<sup>38</sup> 89

The Holy One spoke :

O Partha, such a man does not perish in this world, nor hereafter. For, no one who acts uprightly goes the wrong way, *tata*.<sup>39</sup> 40

Having failed in his *yoga*, he attains to the region of the righteous and after living there for an infinite<sup>40</sup> number of years is again born in the house of a rich and pious<sup>41</sup> man. 41

36. But besides patience, perseverance and good tuition, personal ability has to be taken into account. So Arjuna wants to know what would be the fate of those who faithfully try but yet fail.

37. The *yogi* has to give up all desires for heaven and try for salvation. If he fails to obtain salvation, he misses both heaven and salvation.

38. By this declaration Arjuna shows his absolute trust in the Holy One.

39. '*Tata*' is a form of address that the inferior uses when speaking to a superior. The Holy One uses it as a term of endearment.

40. The reference is to the belief that there are different regions to which the dead repair and stay according to their work on earth. The period of such residence varies also according to the work. 'Infinite' is to be understood as "indefinite".

41. Great men are born in the family of the pious and rich, as for instance, Janaka, Buddha, or in the

Or again, he is born in the family of a wise *yogi*. Such birth in this world is comparatively difficult to obtain.<sup>42</sup> 42

And there, O Kurunandana, he inherits his former corporeal<sup>43</sup> mental equipment and again with redoubled energy tries for salvation. 48

Because of his practice in *yoga* in his pre-existing life, he is attracted towards it as if by force.<sup>44</sup> The hankerer<sup>45</sup> after *yoga* transcends even the *Vedas*. 44

Striving with energy, purged from his sin, reaching perfection after several regenerations, the *yogi* attains salvation at last. 45

The *yogi* is superior to the *tapaswi*,<sup>46</sup> and even to the *jnani*.<sup>47</sup> The *yogi* is superior to

family of the learned and poor, as for instance, Kapila. The first are indicated here.

42. The second are indicated here who are considered as more rare.

43. Both refer to the doctrine of the transmigration of soul which to the modern man of science would strongly suggest the law of heredity and evolution. The mental equipment is called corporeal because according to *Sankhya* and the *Geeta* it is material. If science can admit the inheritance of acquired characters, there is no difficulty in admitting what is indicated here. See p. 28, l. 15.

44. The force is that of a law of nature operating.

45. The hankering comes as result of the force.

46. A *tapaswi* uses mortification of the body as the means for salvation, whereas a *yogi* practises self-control by reasoned intelligence and will.

47. A *jnani* is one who seeks salvation through knowledge, usually meaning the follower of Kapila who held that philosophy alone could save man.

those who are devoted to the sacrifices;††  
Therefore, O Arjuna, be a *yogi*. 46

But of all the *yogis* even, he who attached  
to Me by his innermost spirit, worships Me, full  
of faith,† is the most<sup>49</sup> devoted, in my opinion. 47

*Thus..... Dhyanayoga.*

48. In the text the word *karmi* is used, meaning the *mimamsakas*, that is the followers of the Vedas. The *yogi* is here given a position that is superior to that of *tapaswi*, and the followers of *Sankhya* and the *Vedas*. The *yogi* here means the *karmayogi* who, though he practises the *yoga* system of Patanjali, does not renounce either the world or work.

49. 'Most devoted' is to be understood here as the greatest of the *yogis*. The meaning is that *yoga* is not the end but a means. The end always is God. However successful a *yogi* may be, if he neglects God, his *yoga* alone is of little avail.

## CHAPTER VII

### JNANA-VIJNANA (PHILOSOPHY-SCIENCE)

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The Holy One spoke :

Hear, O Partha, how, with thy heart attached to Me, practising devotion and seeking Me as a refuge, thou mayest know Me<sup>1</sup> fully and without uncertainty. 1

I will declare to thee fully that philosophy<sup>2</sup> coupled with science,<sup>3</sup> which being known, there remains nothing else to know on earth. 2

Among thousands of mortals scarcely one strives after perfection, and even<sup>4</sup> of those who strive after and attain it, scarcely one really understands Me. 3

My<sup>5</sup> nature is divided into these eight categories: solids, liquids, gases, radiating energy, ether, mind, *buddhi* and *ahankara*. 4

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1. A full understanding of God is not possible by science and philosophy alone without faith.

2. *Jnan* or philosophy is that knowledge which enables us to discover in all the constantly changing natural phenomena something constant and immutable.

3. *Vijnan* or science is what enables us to discover how from the one constant and immutable principle all the different things have come to be.

4. People who are considered as the most perfect or successful do not always have a true knowledge of God.

5. According to *Sankhya*, *Prakriti* or nature is independent of *Purusha* or spirit or soul, and consists of 23 categories, whereas the *Gesta* divides *Prakriti* or nature into 8 categories and makes it dependent on God of whom both *Prakriti* and *Purusha* are parts.

But this my nature is of an inferior<sup>6</sup> kind. Learn my superior<sup>7</sup> nature, other than this, of a vital kind, O Mahabahu, by means of which this universe is sustained. 5

Know these to be the womb of all beings. I am the creation<sup>8</sup> and destruction of the whole of the universe. 6

O Dhananjaya, there exists no other superior to Me. Like a string of precious stones the whole of this universe is threaded on Me. 7

I am the sapidity in liquids, O Kaunteya, the radiant energy of the sun and moon, the mystic syllable, 'Om' in all the *Vedas*, the sound in ether and the might of men,<sup>9</sup> 8

I am the untainted sublimation of solids, the brilliance of radiant energy, the vitality of all beings and the *tapa* of *tapaswis*.<sup>10</sup> 9

Know Me, O Partha, as the eternal seed of all creation. I am the wisdom of the wise and the energy of all energetic beings. 10

I am the strength of the strong, devoid of desire<sup>11</sup> and passion. I am the sexual instinct

6. *Prakriti* is material and hence inferior to *Purusha* which is spiritual.

7. *Purusha* is the enlivening principle. Its conjugation with *Prakriti* results in creation.

8. A fine poetical conception which says in effect: "cut me off and the whole universe goes to smithereens."

9 & 10. Much of what is in these and what follows is poetry and too much of detailed meaning ought not to be projected into them. The sense is that God is the essential one principle in all these diverse things.

11. All our strength is derived from God, but it is abused when exerted for the satisfaction of our desires and passions.

in living beings when it does not go against<sup>12</sup> law. 11

And know that all that are of the *sattwa*, *raja* and *tama* nature proceed from Me. I am not in them but they are in Me.<sup>13</sup> 12

All this world, deluded<sup>14</sup> by these three natural qualities, knoweth not Me who transcend these qualities and am imperishable. 13

This divine illusion of Mine, caused by the qualities, is difficult to transcend. Those<sup>15</sup> who come to Me can transcend this illusion. 14

The evil-doing, the deluded and the vilest of men do not come to Me, their wisdom destroyed by illusion and their nature embracing that of the *asuras*.<sup>16</sup> 15

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12. The sexual instinct is implanted in us by God for the preservation of the species, but any of that which is wasted for the gratification of our senses is ungodly.

13. The three qualities of *sattwa*, *raja* and *tama* are God's creation, but God Himself is free from these qualities, i.e., *nirguna*.

14. The delusion comes from the combination of *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, that is, nature and spirit, or what would in modern scientific terms be called, matter and mind. Science deals only with phenomenal nature but God includes not only the phenomenon but also the noumenon. Hence, science can never give us the whole of God, but only a part.

15. Hence, for the noumenal part of God, we must go to God Himself, which is religious experience. The destruction of the illusion is effected somewhat on the line of psychotherapy. The patient is disillusioned and behaves as normal as soon as he is made aware of the forgotten part of his past experience which caused the illusion. Hence, the conviction that our phenomenal experience does not fully represent the truth can only make us aware of our illusion and see things in their true perspective.

16. The *asuras* are the ungodly people.

O Arjuna, four kinds of righteous men worship Me, the suffering,<sup>17</sup> the inquiring,<sup>18</sup> the seeker<sup>19</sup> of specified objects and the wise,<sup>20</sup>  
O Bharatarshabha. 16

Of these the wise, constantly attuned and worshipping Me alone, are of special merit; I am supremely dear to the wise, and they are dear to Me. 17

All these are broad-minded, but the wise are verily my self, I think, for their worshipful souls are fixed on Me,<sup>21</sup> the highest path. 18

After many transmigrations, the wise cometh unto Me. Rare is the Mahatma who seeth "Vasudeva is all".<sup>22</sup> 19

According to their own natures, adopting different modes of worship, those bereft of their reason<sup>23</sup> by a diversity of desire worship different gods. 20

17. Many ungodly people in their sufferings become godly.

18. These are the religious philosophers.

19. The worshippers of God who worship Him to pray for a boon.

20. The wise or the *jnani* who have realized the immutable, imperishable one principle underlying all changing phenomena.

21. His soul is fixed on the underlying one principle, for he pays no attention to the shifting phenomenal experience.

22. God is called Vasudeva because he resides in all created beings. To be convinced that there is nothing but God is the highest knowledge, reached after gaining our experience through many lives.

23. The God that one believes in, is according to the evolution of his mind. As men are in the different stages of evolution, their ideas of God differ. The will to believe in a God is influenced greatly by our emotional and practical interests and much less by our reason.



\* As each worshipper desires to worship with faith his own special form of God, so I bestow on him his unswerving faith.<sup>24</sup> 21

He, endowed with that faith, worships such a one and gets from him the fulfilment of his desires, myself really granting the benefits.<sup>25</sup> 22

These little-minded men get but a short-lived benefit. The worshippers of the gods go to them but My worshippers come to Me.<sup>26</sup> 23

The foolish, not knowing My supreme, imperishable and most excellent nature, imagine that I, the unmanifest, am endowed with manifest form.<sup>27</sup> 24

Surrounded by My magic illusion, I am not manifest to everybody. This deluded world comprehends not Me, the unborn and imperishable.<sup>28</sup> 25

I know all beings, past, present and future but no one knoweth Me. 26

24. God gives every one the freedom to worship as please.

25. No worship done in faith goes for nothing simply because the worshippers' idea of God is not correct. Every one gets his deserts according to God's law. Therefore, whatever god is worshipped, the benefits really come from God.

26. Each one reaches his ideal which is his special form of God.

27. The modern religious philosophy about the personality of God may be here consulted. There is a sense in which the personality of God is permissible, but that sense is not that God is a personal being like one of us, even when raised to the most exalted position.

28. The difficulty of understanding the impersonality of God is due to the imperfections of our sense-organs which cannot sense the noumenon.

All beings, O Bharata, are deluded on this earth by the counteracting delusion arising out of likes and dislikes,<sup>29</sup> O Parantapa. 27

But those men of pure deeds in whom sin has come to an end, freed from the delusion of counteracting impulses, worship Me, steadfast<sup>30</sup> in their vows. 28

They who depending on Me, strive for liberation from birth and death come to know that pure *Brahma*, entire *adhyatma* and all action. 29

They who know Me as embracing all creation,<sup>31</sup> all soul<sup>32</sup> and all action,<sup>33</sup> recognize Me even at the time of their death,<sup>34</sup> having an attuned mind. 30

*Thus . . . . . Jnana-Vijnana Yoga.*

29. The emotional and practical interests.

30. That faith which does not depend on these interests but is firm-footed on knowledge or religious experience, is steadfast.

31. '*Bhuta*' is the Sanskrit word for it, to be explained later.

32. '*Atma*' to be explained later.

33. '*Yajna*'.

34. Refers to the belief that the next birth depends greatly on what a man thinks or does at the time of his death. The psychological explanation is that anything that a man thinks of at the time of his death must be very dear to him, because when in a death struggle, a man is likely to forget all except his own immediate trouble. To think of God at the time of death is only possible for him who has come to think of God as his 'all'.

## CHAPTER VIII

### AKSHARA-BRAHMA (ETERNAL BEING)

Arjuna spoke :

What is that *Brahma*,<sup>1</sup> what *adhyatma*,<sup>2</sup> what *karma*,<sup>3</sup> O Purushottama? And what is called *adhibhuta*<sup>4</sup> and what is called *adhidaiva*?<sup>5</sup> 1

What is *adhiyajna*?<sup>6</sup> O Madhusudana, how is he<sup>7</sup> to be contemplated in this body? And

1-6. The different modes of worship have given rise to the different terms, which have been but very briefly explained here. There were four different angles from which God was viewed:—1. The material view, called *adhibhuta*, which took cognizance of nothing else but the five elements: solids, liquids, gases, radiance and ether. 2. *Adhiyajna* which viewed everything from the standpoint of work or *karma* or *yajna*. The whole of our life is *yajna*: God presides over all *yajnas*; our sacrifices are *yajnas* and God is worshipped by *yajnas*. 3. *Adhidaivata* or the view that beneath all natural phenomena is a living principle or *Purusha* who really does the work, for example, the sun is not only a material thing but it has a living principle or *devata*, who does the work and is an object of worship. 4. *Adhyatma*, or the view that just as every man has a soul, so everything has a subtle being, e.g., the five *tanmatras* of the five subtle elements. See p. 27 l. 23. According to *Sankhya* these different souls are different but the *Geeta* views souls as parts of the universal soul. Whenever we speak of *adhyatma* we take the universal soul view. *Adhideha* is that which concerns the individual bodies. What Arjuna is now being told is that in everything, whether material, or kinetic, or bodily, or mental or spiritual, it is God who resides. *Brahma* is indestructible, unchangeable and beyond the phenomenal and noumenal. These different forms through which God or the Supreme *Brahma* manifests Himself are mentioned here because unless one can penetrate through all these cloaks or wrappings to the central self or spirit of all, it will not be practicable for him to fix his mind on Him at the time of his death.

7. *Adhideha*,<sup>8</sup>

how at the time of death art thou known, by the self-controlled? 2

The Holy One spoke:

*Brahma* is the indestructible Supreme. *Adhyatma* is essential nature. The emanation that causes the birth of beings is called *karma*. 8

That which embraces the phenomenal world is *adhibhuta*. *Purusha* is *adhidaivatam*. I am *adhiyajna*, O Best of living beings, in this body. 4

And he who thinks of Me at the last moment when shedding the body, partakes of My nature. In this there is no doubt. 5

Whomsoever<sup>8</sup> one may be thinking of at the end of life when shedding the body, to that being he reaches, having always thought about him. 6

Therefore fight, fixing your thoughts on Me always. Having set on Me your heart and understanding thou shalt doubtless reach Me. 7

With the mind going after nothing else, attuned by practised *yoga*, and meditating on Him, O Partha, one reaches the divine and Supreme *Purusha*. 8

He who at the time of death thinketh on the ancient, omniscient, all-ruler, minuter<sup>9</sup> than

8. What a man thinks of at the time of death is supposed to be what he has cherished most throughout his life.

9. The ideas here have been taken from the *Upanishads*.

the minute, the supporter of all, of form unimaginable, of the colour of the sun, beyond<sup>10</sup> darkness, by drawing<sup>11</sup> his life-breath between the two eyebrows by the power of *yoga*, fixed in devotion, with immovable mind, attains to ~~that~~ that is Divine and Supreme. 9-10

That which the learned in the *Vedas* call *akshara*,<sup>12</sup> which the passionless strivers enter, desiring, which men practise *brahmacharyya*,<sup>13</sup> that path I will declare to thee in brief. 11

Restraining all the senses, confining the mind in his heart, fixing his life-breath in his head, attaining *samadhi*,<sup>14</sup> reciting the one syllable, 'Om', symbolizing *Brahma*, thinking on Me, he who sheds the body, attains the highest path. 12-13

10. It is a difficult undertaking to describe God. Hence, contradictory ideas have been used. God is not only bright as the sun but He is darker than darkness.

11. A technical instruction that is to be found in the practice of *yoga*.

12. The indestructible principle that underlies all seeming phenomena. Some have also taken it as the 'letter', 'om' which means God.

13. The austere life led by a *Brahman* student while learning.

14. The perfect *yoga*, in which condition the personal exhibits itself as the cosmical, the dimensions of our beings and feelings show their cosmical nature, for they are elevated to the supra-mental plane where the character of our experiences changes. The limitations of our experiences are withdrawn and our consciousness is released from its environmental setting. The conflict and discord are dissolved as soon as the access to the fountain-spring is attained. It is not a mentalised understanding but a direct seeing into the heart of things. It reveals the mysteries of life which it

He who, not thinking of anything else, constantly thinketh on Me, I am easily obtainable by that constantly attuned *yogi*, O Partha. 14

The most successful *mahatmas* having reached Me have not to enter that abode<sup>15</sup> of sorrow, the shifting transmigrations.

People have to transmigrate after attaining any region up to *Brahmaloka*,<sup>16</sup> but O Kuntaya, not after having once reached Me.<sup>17</sup> 15

Those who know the day of *Brahma*, lasting a thousand aeons, and his night, ending after a thousand aeons, know night and day.<sup>18</sup> 17

is not possible for the intellect to see or understand. The intellectual background is necessary to equip the understanding but the psychic insight is required to enter into the mysteries of the spirit and to enjoy them.

15. Sorrows continue till one is freed from the vicious circle of transmigrations.

16. The different *lokas*, or regions, are merited by different kinds of *karma* or work. The highest is the *Brahmaloka* but even this is perishable because nothing, but the eternal God remains after the periodical destruction of the universe.

17. Therefore, to have reached the eternal God, is the only sure way of being above changes. The author will now speak of how creation and destruction proceed.

18. An aeon is a *mahayuga*, comprising the four *yugas*: *satya*, *treta*, *dwapara* and *kali*. Between creation and destruction is an inactive period, equal to the active period of phenomenal life. The idea is of the 'block universe' type. Science no longer believes in the 'block universe', but that does not vitiate what meaning is intended to be conveyed here. Astronomy tells how in one region a star is being created while in another it is being destroyed. Taking these stars or star groups, individually, the idea is quite in consonance with modern science.

The phenomenal<sup>19</sup> world issues out of the *avyakta*<sup>20</sup> at the commencement of the day; at the commencement of the night it again disappears into what is called the *avyakta*. 18

O Partha, all those created beings are repeatedly born at the commencement of the day and are re-absorbed at the commencement of the night by ordination.<sup>21</sup> 19

That eternal principle which is superior<sup>22</sup> to the *avyakta*, does not suffer dissolution even after all the universe has dissolved. 20

That *avyakta*, which is also called *akshara*,<sup>23</sup> is named the highest path. That supreme abode is Mine, reaching which nobody has to transmigrate. 21

O Partha, that Supreme *Purusha* in whom is all creation and by whom all this is pervaded, is to be reached by single devotion. 22

19-20. The phenomenal is *vyakta* and the *avyakta* is here used in the *Sankhya* sense and not in the sense of *Parabrahma*. By supposing that there is only one kind of electric energy, which by differentiating into plus and minus gives rise to protons and electrons, we can imagine how the phenomenal comes out of the *avyakta*.

21. The mass action is regulated by law, that is, it is predictable, but not the individual, which is governed by the law of indeterminacy. This is eternal recurrence.

22. God Himself is above all laws.

23. 'Akshara' means unchangeable or eternal. The supreme abode of God is not only *avyakta* or unmanifestable, but also unchangeable. Undifferentiated electricity is unmanifestable but it is not unchangeable. Modern science which only deals with manifestable and changeable nature, can give us no information about the unmanifestable and unchangeable.

O Bharatarshabha, I shall now declare to thee that time when dying the *yogis* do not transmigrate and when they do. 28

When<sup>24</sup> a man with knowledge of *Brahma* dies during day-time in the six months of the northern solstice and in the fortnight when the moon is waxing, and is cremated, he attains to *Brahma*. 24

The<sup>25</sup> *yogi* who dies at night in the six months of the southern solstice, and in the fortnight when the moon is waning, and is but partially cremated in smoking fire, attains only to the region lit by the moon and has to transmigrate. 25

These are the two eternally decreed, enlightened<sup>26</sup> and dark<sup>27</sup> paths of the world, going by one of which man does not transmigrate, and by the other he does. 26.

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24-25. The meaning of these two slokas has been much disputed. Mahatma Gandhi in his edition of the Geeta, with his characteristic frankness, admits that he does not understand it. Lokamanya Tilak in his Geeta has tried to make out some meaning by supposing that 'fire' in sloka 24 is to be taken as 'cremation' and it is also understood in sloka 25. These two paths begin after cremation and are to be found in the *Upanishads* as *devayan*, the waxing fortnight, and *pitriyan*, the waning fortnight. Others have cut the Gordian knot by explaining that the idea is to emphasise the difference between the bright path of knowledge and the dark path of ignorance. The old commentators take *Kala* not in the sense of time but in that of path marked by the presence of special time-gods. Their idea is that a departed soul passes through the jurisdiction of such gods who help or escort him in the path.

26 & 27. The two ways of knowledge and ignorance.



The *yogi* who is aware of the existence of these two paths, is never deluded.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, O Arjuna, at all times be in *yoga*. 27

Knowing all this, the *yogi* transcends the merits that result from the *Vedas*, the sacrifices, the *tapas*, and benefactions and reaches the Supreme and primordial region.<sup>29</sup> 28

Thus . . . . . *Akshara-Brahma-Yoga*.

28. The delusion comes from not knowing that knowledge can liberate us.

29. He sees the underlying stable principle amidst all the apparent changing world.

## CHAPTER IX

### RAJVIDYA-RAJGUHYA (THE HIGHEST AND THE MOST SACRED KNOWLEDGE)

#### The Holy One spoke:

To thee, not fault<sup>1</sup>-finding, I shall now declare this profoundest secret, philosophy combined with science, knowing which thou shalt be freed from evil. 1

This is kingly<sup>2</sup> art, kingly secret, most pure, visibly<sup>3</sup> comprehensible, happily<sup>4</sup> performable, righteous and inexhaustible. 2

Men without faith in this religion, not reaching Me, gyrate<sup>5</sup> in the paths of this world of death. 3

By My *avyakta*<sup>6</sup> personality is all creation pervaded. All created beings are accommodated in Me, but not I in them. 4

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1. The Geeta is not to be preached to any one who is given to fault-finding, the Holy One has said at the end of the poem. It is a psychological necessity and ought not to be put down to clannishness.

2. Not to be understood as 'beating kings' but as the highest.

3. Clearly.

4. Can be performed with ease or happiness.

5. Eternal.

6. Cycle. The world of death is the perceptible phenomenal world.

7. Invisible.

8. The phenomenal world is but a part of God, not the whole.

All created beings are not in Me too.<sup>3</sup>  
 Mark My mystic<sup>10</sup> power. My soul from which  
 all created beings have sprung and which sustains  
 them, is not in them.<sup>11</sup> 5

Understand that just as the mighty air  
 circulating everywhere<sup>1</sup> is ever confined in the  
 atmosphere, so are all created beings confined  
 in Me.<sup>12</sup> 6

O Kaunteya, at the end of each cycle all  
 created beings re-enter My nature and again at  
 the beginning of each cycle I re-create them. 7

Resuming My own nature I repeatedly create  
 the whole of the collection of these created beings,  
 in accordance with the law of nature.<sup>13</sup> 8

Nor does this work fetter Me, O Dhananjaya,  
 remaining unconcerned<sup>14</sup> like an ascetic I am  
 unattached to any of that work. 9

9. When we consider God as the trinity of the  
 phenomenal, noumenal and super-noumenal, we can see  
 how created beings are in Him and yet not in Him.  
 The created world is only in one part of Him.

10. The mystic power is the *yoga* or power of creation  
 by which the *avyakta* becomes phenomenal. It is known  
 as *maya*.

11. Is only partially there, not fully. ,

12. The air can move freely but it cannot transcend  
 the atmosphere.

13. God alone can create, but once having created, He  
 lets it follow its own law.

14. He is content to let it follow its own law  
 unconcerned.

Under My presidency<sup>15</sup> does nature produce the animate and inanimate beings, by reason whereof this universe cycles,<sup>16</sup> O Kaunteya. 10

Me, in this human<sup>17</sup> form, the unwise ignore, unaware of My supreme aspect as the Great Lord of the universe; 11

partaking, as they do of the nature of *rakshasas*<sup>18</sup> and *asuras*<sup>19</sup> they are deluded, and hope and work, and gather knowledge in vain. 12

But O Partha, the *mahatmas*, partaking of the nature of the *devas*,<sup>20</sup> recognizing in Me the inexhaustible and primordial source of creation, worship Me single-minded. 13

Always magnifying Me, strenuous, firm in vows, prostrating themselves before Me, they worship me with devotion, ever attuned. 14

15. But nature cannot create herself. It is only under God's presidency that creation is effected.

16. Recurs.

17. See arguments for and against the personality of God. p. 14, l. 23.

18. Semi-human giants, brutal and bloodthirsty, product of gigantism in man before genus *Homo Sapiens* became stabilized.

19. The *asuras* were the opponents of the *devas* with whom they often fought. They were godless.

20. Of divine nature.

Others also, offering the sacrifice of knowledge,<sup>21</sup> worship Me who face<sup>22</sup> as the One<sup>23</sup> and the Manifold<sup>24</sup> everywhere. 15

I<sup>25</sup> am the *srouttha yajna*, the *smartha yajna*, the offering to the departed parents, the *aushadha*, the incantations, the fire and the sacrifice offered in it. 16

I<sup>26</sup> am the father of the universe, its mother, grandfather, law-giver, the object of knowledge, the purifier, 'omkar' and the *Vedas*, *Rik*, *Sama* and *Yaju*, 17

the way, sustainer, Lord, witness, abode, shelter, friend, creation, destruction, existence, dissolution, seed inexhaustible, 18

O Arjuna, I heat, rain or stop it; I am life and death, and existence and non-existence too. 19

The followers of the three *Vedas*, drinking<sup>27</sup> *soma*, purified from sin, worship Me by offering sacrifices and pray of Me residence in heaven and

21. The worship of God by *jnan-yajna*, or the offering of knowledge differs according to the kind of knowledge.

22. A sacrifice is supposed to be eaten by him to whom it is offered, therefore it must reach the face or rather the mouth. God's mouth is everywhere, so he faces all creation.

23 & 24. These have been differently interpreted by different annotators. Some have conceived that the reference is to the *dwaita* and *advaita* nature of God. Others think that these refer to the different ways of the *Vaishnava* worshippers who try to realise God as father, mother, friend, master, etc.

25. See p. 21, l. 1.

26. Much of slokas 17, 18 and 19 is poetry.

27. The juice of *soma* is a kind of sacrificial wine.

after attaining to the sacred region of the Indra in heaven, enjoy heavenly bliss. 20

They return to earth at the expiration of the term of great heavenly enjoyment that their piety entitled them to. Thus the followers of the three *Vedas*, desirous of enjoyments, have to keep on going the round.<sup>21</sup> 21

The maintenance<sup>22</sup> and security of those who worship Me thinking of Me alone to the exclusion of any other desire and always devoted to Me, are undertaken by Me. 22

Even<sup>23</sup> those who, actuated by regard and full of faith, worship other gods, really worship Me, though contrary to the right procedure, O Kaunteya. 23

For, I am the enjoyer and the Lord of all sacrifices, but they<sup>31</sup> have to transmigrate as they do not really know Me. 24

The worshippers of the *devas* go<sup>32</sup> to them. The worshippers of the departed parents go to

28. The followers of the *Vedas* pray for the fulfilment of specific desires. But there is no end of desires. They can never give lasting peace which liberation from desires can give.

29. Literally, the acquisition and conservation of the wherewithal to live. If a man were to give up all desires, how is he to live? The reply to that question is given here. To a man who can entirely depend on God, livelihood is assured.

30. There is but only one God though there are 330 millions of different Hindu gods. The worship of all these is really the worship of one God though in different ways.

31. Till one has realized the true God and the right way of worship, one does not attain *moksha* or salvation.

32. Attain.

them. The worshippers of the elements go to them. My worshippers, to Me, also. 25

If an attuned<sup>33</sup> soul offereth to Me with devotion a leaf, a flower, a fruit, water, I accept them, offered as they are with devotion. 26

Whatsoever<sup>34</sup> thou doest, whatsoever thou eatest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest, whatsoever *tapa* thou doest, O Kaunteya, do thou that as an offering to Me. 27

Thus<sup>35</sup> shalt thou be freed from the bonds of action, yielding good or evil results. Thy soul attuned by the *yoga* of renunciation and liberated shall come unto Me. 28

I am the same to all created beings. There is none hateful to Me, nor<sup>36</sup> dear. Those who worship Me with devotion are in Me and I in them. 29

Even if a confirmed sinner worships Me whole-heartedly, he should be considered as a *sadhu*,<sup>37</sup> for he is rightly resolved. 30

33. The kind of offering makes no difference to the acceptance, which is solely dependent on whether or not the offerer is devoted to God and attuned in soul.

34. Not an occasional offering here and there, but the whole of our work is to be devoted to God.

35. Having offered your all to God, you do not need to trouble about the result, for thereby you have purchased the true freedom, the liberation from all desires.

36. To many this impartial attitude seems to lack that warmth of feeling which they desire. The God of the Geeta promises no boon to His followers, except that they partake of His nature.

37. An honest and righteous person.

Soon he becometh religious-minded and gaineth eternal peace. O Kaunteya, My devotees never perish. You may guarantee that. 81

O Partha, refuged in Me, even women,<sup>38</sup> *Vaisya*,<sup>39</sup> *Shudra*<sup>40</sup> and those born<sup>41</sup> 'in sin, reach the Supreme Path, 82

not to speak of pious *Brahmans* and *Rajarshis*. Being in this transient joyless world, do thou worship Me. 83

Fix thy mind on Me; be My devotee; be My worshipper; do thy obeisance to Me. Thus making Me the sole end and aim of your life and attached to Me, thou shalt come unto Me. 84

*Thus. . . . . Rajvidya-Rajguhya-Yoga.*

38. The same reasons which justified the creation of separate castes for separate work, justified a life of the women that was different from the men's. It was that one's life-work should befit that person's nature. The work of looking after the house and the rearing up of children could not ordinarily be combined with the hard work of mastering the *Vedas*, which being unwritten had to be wholly and accurately committed to memory, which was a feat that even all men could not do. Hence the study of the *Vedas* was forbidden to women, generally, but there were exceptions to this rule and some women of distinction did learn the *Vedas*. The *Mahabharata* came to be written for the express purpose of educating men and women who were debarred from learning the *Vedas* and being initiated in the *Vedic* lore. This special treatment of women has been interpreted in some quarters as a degradation.

39. The commercial and agricultural classes, whose social status was inferior to that of the *Brahmans* and *Kshatriyas*.

40. The serving class.

41. Not alone the children of unmarried mothers but the children of all very sinful men.



## CHAPTER X

### BIBHUTI (GLORIES)

The Holy One spoke :

Yet again, O Mahabahu, hear thou My supreme counsel, which, desiring thy welfare, I will declare to thee who art delighted.<sup>1</sup> 1

Neither the *devas*,<sup>2</sup> nor the *maharshis*,<sup>3</sup> know My origin. I am by all means the origin of the *devas* and the *maharshis*. 2

He who knoweth Me, unborn, eternal, the Lord of creation, is liberated from all sin, being undeluded.<sup>4</sup> 3

*Buddhi*, knowledge, non-illusion, forgiveness, truth, self-restraint, calmness, pleasure, pain, presence, absence, and courage, 4

harmlessness, equanimity, content, austerity, charity, fame and obloquy are the various characteristics of created beings that have issued from Me. 5

The seven<sup>5</sup> *maharshis*, and the four<sup>6</sup> preceding them, and the *Manus*,<sup>7</sup> are the creation of My mind, from whom all men have descended. 6

1. Delighted to hear my words.

2 & 3. All these excel men in knowledge.

4. We commit sin only because we cannot realize God. the Lord of creation. In the next three slokas are enumerated what He has created.

5. The seven *maharshis* here indicated are :—Mareechi, Angirasa, Atri, Pulastha, Pulaha, Krutu and Vasishtha.

6. There is much discussion as to who these preceding four are. The *Chaturvyuha*, beginning with Vasudeva, are the four here meant, according to some.

7. There are seven Manus.

He who knows of this My expansion<sup>8</sup> and power<sup>9</sup> of *yoga* in reality, is attuned by unshaken<sup>10</sup> *yoga*, no doubt. 7

I am the origin of all; from Me has proceeded all. Knowing this the wise worship Me, rapt in emotion. 8

Attached to Me by mind and soul, enlightening each other, ever discoursing on Me, they become happy and joyful. 9

To these, ever intent on Me, worshipping Me joyfully, I give them that *buddhi*<sup>11</sup> *yoga* by which they come unto Me. 10

Out of compassion for them, I, dwelling in them, destroy the darkness of their ignorance by the illuminating lamp of wisdom. 11

Arjuna spoke:

Thou art the supreme cosmos, the supreme region, the supremely pure, the

8. God was one but He wanted to be many. That is given as the reason for creation. All creation is, therefore, His expansion.

9. The creative power of God which can make the *avyakta* phenomenal.

10. Our firm belief in God results from a realization of God's true self.

11. The sense of numen is the gift of God and is preceded by contemplation. Contemplation is the best mental effort revealing the truths and values of the mental order. It affords the highest intellectual delight. The sense of numen carries us beyond the philosophic contemplation and introduces rapport, a divine rapture and exhilaration. The holy spirit then takes hold of us and regulates all movements in us. This is the blessed commingling of life and spirit, the ingrafting of a superior force which allows us to see more than what the philosophic sense can endow us with.

eternal *Purusha*, the primeval self-revealing  
Deity and Lord. 12

All the *rishis*, *devarshis*,<sup>12</sup> and Narada,<sup>13</sup>  
Asita,<sup>14</sup> Devala,<sup>15</sup> Vyasa<sup>16</sup> have thus proclaimed  
Thee, and Thou Thyself tellest me so. 13

O Keshava, all that Thou hast told me I  
believe to be true. O Holy One, neither the  
*devas*, nor the *danavas*,<sup>17</sup> know Thy true self. 14

O Purushottama, creator of all beings, Lord  
of creation, the highest of *devas*, the Lord of  
the universe, Thyself only knowest Thy own  
true self. 15

Deign to tell me in full Thy divine  
expanding<sup>18</sup> glories by which expanding glories  
Thou dost pervade all these worlds. 16

O *Yogi*, how can I by constantly meditating  
on Thee, know Thee? And O Holy One, in what  
different aspects art Thou to be thought of? 17

O Janardana, tell me again of Thy *yoga* and  
expanding glories in detail, for I do not tire of  
hearing Thy ambrosia-like words. 18

12. One of the seven kinds of *rishis*.

13. Literally means one who makes the gifts to man  
of the knowledge of *Brahma*, one of the creations of God's  
mind.

14. A *muni*.

15. Son of Asit *muni*, also called Astavakra.

16. The author of the *Mahabharata*.

17. Akin to the *asuras*, the opponents of the *devas*

18. The attributes of God.

The Holy One spoke:

So be it. O best of Kurus, I will declare to thee My divine expanding glories chiefly, for there is no end to their details. 19

O Gudakesha, I am the soul<sup>19</sup> implanted in the heart of all created beings. I am the beginning and the middle and the end too, of created beings. 20

Of the *adityas*<sup>20</sup> I am Vishnu; of radiating bodies I am the raying Sun; of the *maruts*<sup>21</sup> I am Marichi;<sup>22</sup> of the *nakshatras*<sup>23</sup> I am the Moon. 21

Of the *Vedas* I am the *Sama*<sup>24</sup> *Veda*; of the *devas* I am the Indra;<sup>25</sup> of the sense-organs I am the heart; of living beings I am life. 22

And of the *rudras*<sup>26</sup> I am Shankara; of the *yakshas*<sup>27</sup> and *rakshasas* I am Vittesha<sup>28</sup> and of

19. According to *Sankhya* the individual souls are separate entities but according to the Geeta, all souls are parts of the same universal soul.

20. The 12 *adityas* were:—Tapan, Indra, Ravi, Gavasti, Yama, Hiranyareta, Divakar, Chitra, Vishnu, Suryya, and Devajna.

21. The *Maruts* are the winds of whom there are forty-nine.

22. Mareechi is the best of them.

23. Shining celestial bodies.

24. In many places the Rikveda has been given preference to the Samaveda. Possibly, the preference here given is due to its being sung

25. The king of the *devas*.

26. There were eight *rudras*:—Rudra, Bhava, Sharbba, Ishan, Pashupati, Bhima, Ugra and Shankara.

27. The worshippers of *yakshama*.

28. The king of the *yakshas*.

the *vasus*<sup>29</sup> I am the Fire; of the mountains  
I am the *Samern*.<sup>30</sup> 23

O Partha, know that amongst the chief  
priests I am *Vrihaspati*; <sup>31</sup> amongst generals  
I am *Kartikeya*:<sup>32</sup> I am the ocean amongst  
lakes. 24

Amongst *maharshis* I am *Bhrigu*; <sup>33</sup> of speech  
I am the one syllable; of *yajna* I am *japa-yajna*; <sup>34</sup>  
of stationary things I am the Himalayas. 25

Of trees I am the *ashwattha*; <sup>35</sup> and of  
*devarshis* I am *Narada*; of *gandharvas*, <sup>36</sup> *Chitra-*  
*ratha*; <sup>37</sup> of the perfected, *Kapila*<sup>38</sup> *muni*. 26

Of horses, know Me as *Uchchaishrava*, <sup>39</sup> raised  
with the nectar; of lordly elephants, *Airavata*<sup>40</sup>  
and king amongst men. 27

29. There were 8 *vasus*:—*Bhava*, *Dhruva*, *Soma*,  
*Vishnu*, *Anil*, *Anal*, *Pratyusha* and *Pravaba*.

30. The mountain behind which the sun sets.

31. The chief priest of the *devas*.

32. The general of the *devas* and son of *Siva*.

33. A *muni*, a son of *Brahma*.

34. Also called *nama-yajna*, the repetition of God's  
name.

35. *Ficus religiosa*.

36. The heavenly musicians.

37. The son of *Kashyapa*, also called *Angarparna*.

38. The author of *Sankhya* philosophy is thus given a  
very high position.

39. The horse of *Indra* that was obtained by churning  
the ocean, along with nectar and other things.

40. *Indra's* elephant

Of weapons I am the thunder; of cows I am the cow of plenty; I am the Cupid in procreation; of serpents<sup>41</sup> I am Vasuki.<sup>42</sup> 28.

Of snakes<sup>43</sup> I am Ananta;<sup>44</sup> of amphibians I am Varuna;<sup>45</sup> of the departed ancestors I am Aryama;<sup>46</sup> Yama of the self-regulated ones. 29.

Of the *daityas* I am Prahlad;<sup>47</sup> of calculators I am time; of the wild beasts I am the lion, and of birds I am Garuda.<sup>48</sup> 30.

Of purifiers I am the wind; of warriors, Rama;<sup>49</sup> of fishes I am the Makara;<sup>50</sup> of streams I am the Ganges. 31

O Arjuna, I am the beginning, end and middle of creations; of sciences, the spiritual science; the speech of orators I am. 32.

Of letters I am the letter<sup>51</sup> A; and of *samases*<sup>52</sup> I am the *dwandwa*.<sup>53</sup> I am also the

41 and 42. The earth was supposed to rest on the head of the non-poisonous serpent, Vasuki.

43 and 44. The hooded and poisonous snake that protects the head of Narayana.

45. The God of rain or water.

46. One of the regions for the departed ancestors.

47. The son of the *daitya* Hiranyakasipu.

48. The bird who is ridden by Narayana.

49. The hero of the *Ramayana*. Some have taken it to mean Parasurama.

50. The snouted fish, the carrier of Ganga.

51. The first letter of the Sanskrit happens to be the same as that of the English alphabet.

52. The conjoining of more than one word is in Sanskrit grammar called *samas*.

53. Dwandwa is the name given to a particular *samas*.

eternal Time; I am the Destiny facing<sup>54</sup> every-where. 38

I am the all-destroying death and the origin of future, also fame,<sup>55</sup> fortune, speech, memory, intelligence, patience and forgiveness of women. 34

Of hymns I am the great hymn; the Gayatri of metres; of months I am the Margasheersha, of seasons, the spring. 35

Of deceitfuls I am the gambler; of the spirited I am the spirit, I am the victory, I am the determination, and I am the substance of the substantial. 36

Of the *Yadavas* I am Vasudeva,<sup>56</sup> of *Pandavas*, Dhananjaya,<sup>57</sup> of the *munis* I am Vyasa,<sup>58</sup> and of poets I am the poet Ushana.<sup>59</sup> 37

Of<sup>62</sup> the subjugators I am the sceptre; of the seekers of victory I am statecraft; and of secrets also I am silence, I am the wisdom of the wise. 38

54. The creator *Brahma* is represented as having four faces, facing the four quarters.

55. These seven have been personified as sisters, hence of women.

56. The most sacred incantation.

57. The month of *Agrahayana* which at that time was the first month of the year, as the month of *Chaitra* at present is.

58. Shree Krishna.

59. Arjuna.

60. Mentioned before in sloka 13.

61. That Ushana is mentioned as the best of the poets instead of Kalidasa, shows that the Geeta was written before Kalidasa was born.

62. The whole of this sloka is a fine conception.

And that which is the seed of all creation is also Me, O Arjuna. Nor is there aught, animate or inanimate, that can exist without Me. 39.

O Parantapa, there is no end to My glorious expanding glories. Yet what I have declared of My expanding glories is but in brief. 40.

Whatever it may be, all that is glorious, beautiful and mighty, know thou that they have arisen out of a fragment of My glory. 41.

Or what is the use of your knowing all this in detail, O Arjuna? I am holding the whole of this universe by a fraction of Mine. 42

*Thus . . . . . Bibhuti-Yoga,*



CHAPTER' XI  
VISWARUPA DARSAN  
(GOD AS IMMANENT IN THE UNIVERSE)

Arjuna spoke :

By what Thou hast spoken of the supreme secret concerning the soul to favour<sup>1</sup> me, this my delusion<sup>2</sup> is gone. 1

O Kamalapatraksha,<sup>3</sup> from Thee have I heard in detail of the creation and destruction of beings and also of Thy imperishable greatness. 2

O Parameswara,<sup>4</sup> I am desirous<sup>5</sup> of having a vision of Thy divine form as Thou describest Thy own self, O Purushottama.<sup>6</sup> 3

---

This vision of God is an aspect of the universe which is only a small part of God, in which *pran* or life plays the most important role showing the significance of time as the great destroyer. The chapter is very dear to the orthodox.

1. To lift Arjuna from the 'slough of despond'.
2. That the death of the body is the death of the soul.
3. Literally, one whose eyes are like lotus leaves.
4. The Supreme God.
5. The description of the expanding glories of God excited the desire.
6. Literally, the better person, as explained in the 15th chapter.

O Lord, if Thou thinkest I might see it,  
do Thou, O Yogeswara,<sup>7</sup> discover to me Thy  
imperishable self. 4

The Holy One spoke :

Behold, O Partha, My divine<sup>8</sup> forms, in  
hundreds and thousands of multifarious and  
multi-coloured shapes. 5

Behold the *adityas*, the *vasus*, the *rudras*,  
the two *aswinis* as also the *Maruts*; behold  
many marvels, never seen before, O Bharata. 6

O Gudakesha, behold now in this My body  
in one place the whole universe, both animate  
and inanimate, and aught else thou desirest  
to see. 7

With these thine own eyes thou art not  
able to see Me. I give to thee divine<sup>9</sup> eyes.  
Behold My divine *yoga*.<sup>10</sup> 8

Sanjaya spoke ;

O king, after saying this, the Supreme Lord  
of *yoga* discovered to Partha the divine form  
supreme, 9

7. God creates the phenomenal world by the power  
of His *yoga maya*; hence, the appropriateness of the address  
here, meaning the Lord of *yoga*.

8. The forms are divine because they cannot be seen  
by the mortal eyes.

9. A sort of television in which the universe could  
be exhibited.

10. The *yoga* of creation or *maya*.

with many faces and eyes, with many strange forms, with many divine ornaments, with many upraised divine weapons, 10

with divine garlands and divine vestures, with divine-scented pastes, the all-marvellous, boundless God, with<sup>11</sup> face turned in all directions. 11

If a thousand suns are to arise simultaneously in the sky, their effulgence might match the glory of that Mahatma.<sup>12</sup> 12

There in the person of the God of gods, beheld Arjuna the whole of the universe, divided into many parts, coalesce.<sup>13</sup> 13

Then Dhananjaya, marvelling and with hair standing on end, the palms clasped together, bowed down his head to the God and said: 14

Arjuna said:

O God, in Thy person I do behold all the *devas* and the congregations of the different created beings, the divine *rishis*,<sup>14</sup> all the serpents<sup>15</sup> and *Brahma*,<sup>16</sup> the Lord of the *devas*, seated on his lotus seat. 15

11. Seeing and seen everywhere.

12. Literally, 'great soul' but meaning 'paramatma' or the supreme soul.

13. Focussed and screened.

14. Next to the gods are the great sages, the *rishis*.

15. Winged serpents, called *takshakas*.

16. *Brahma*, the creator is represented as sitting on a lotus.

O Lord of the universe, Vision of the universe, I behold Thee everywhere, multitudinous in form, yet I am unable to see either the beginning, middle or end of Thee.<sup>17</sup> 16

I behold Thee everywhere with discus, mace and crown, shining everywhere like massed radiance, blinding like a ball of blazing fire immeasurable. 17

Thou art the supreme unchangeable, object of knowledge; Thou art the supreme shelter of the universe; Thou art the eternal preserver of the eternal religion, the eternal Purusha, I believe. 18

I see Thee, without beginning, middle or end, infinitely powerful, with infinite number of arms, with eyes like the sun and the moon, Thy mouth spitting out burning flames, heating the universe with Thy rays. 19

O Mahatma, alone dost Thou pervade heaven, earth and the space<sup>18</sup> between them, likewise all quarters. The three<sup>19</sup> worlds tremble<sup>20</sup> to see this Thy wonderful and mighty vision. 20

Those bands of *suras* are entering into Thee. Some of them terrified are invoking Thy protection with joined palms. Bands of *maharshis*<sup>21</sup> and

---

17. The only thing that has neither beginning, end or middle, is the sphere, boundless but not infinite.

18. That there must be something to fill up space between matter was the consideration that led Kapila to postulate ether.

19. Heaven, earth and the nether world.

20. The mortal is out of his element in the immortal setting.

21. The great *rishis* or sages.

*siddhas*<sup>22</sup> crying "all hail" are chanting Thy praises with choice phrases. 21

*Rudras, adityas, vasus, sadhyas*,<sup>23</sup> *vishwas*,<sup>24</sup> the two *aswinis, maruts, ushmapas*,<sup>25</sup> *gandharvas, yakshas, siddhas, asuras*—all these in bands are beholding Thee wonder-struck. 22

O Mahabahu, viewing Thy immense form, multi-faced, multi-eyed, multi-armed, multi-abdomen-ed and exhibiting innumerable teeth, all the world is terrified as well as myself. 23

Stretching out to the skies, radiant and multi-coloured, the mouth gaping, the great eyes shining, my inner self is quaking to see Thee. Gone is my peace; I can endure no longer, O Vishnu. 24

Seeing Thy face, terrible with Thy teeth, like the devouring flame of time,<sup>26</sup> I have lost my bearings and I know no happiness. Mercy, O Lord of the *Devas*, Abode of the Universe. 25

There all the sons of Dhritarashtra, the multitude of kings, with Bheeshma, Drona, that son of Suta, as also our noble warriors, are entering in hurry Thy terrible mouth, distorted by the exhibition of the teeth, the crunched heads of some of them being seen sticking in the interstices of the teeth.<sup>27</sup> 26, 27

---

22. Those who have reached perfection, such as Kapila muni.

23. Sadhyas were the *devas* of that name.

24. *Viswadevas*.

25. Departed parents.

26. Time, the destroyer of all.

27. A terrible and gruesome spectacle.

As the many streams of rivers rushing ocean-wards enter the ocean, so all these warriors of men enter Thy blazing mouth. 28

Just as the moths enter the burning lamp with gathering speed for their destruction, so also the men enter Thy mouth with gathering speed for their destruction. 29

Everywhere Thy flaming mouth licks up and devours all men, O Vishnu. Thy terrible flaming rays filling up all the universe, heat it. 30

Deign to tell me who Thou art in this terrible form. Hail to Thee, Thou most excellent God, mercy. I beg to know Thee, the original Purusha, for I do not understand your present behaviour.<sup>28</sup> 31

The Holy One spoke :

I am time, the terrible destroyer of beings, engaged in destroying beings in this world.<sup>2</sup> Even without your intervention, all these warriors present in this army will cease to exist. 32

Therefore, do thou arise and win renown. Enjoy the rich kingdom by slaying thy enemies. I have had these killed by Me long ago.

28. The vision was evidently a series, as in television. The unexpected gruesome vision was a climax and terrified even Arjuna, the great warrior. It was designed to bring Arjuna back to the main business at hand, fighting.

29. The reference is to the cause of the birth of Shree Krishna in the world. The world was groaning under the weight of a tremendous population and the purpose of his birth was to get rid of the excess by engineering India's greatest war. Incidentally, we are told that in all ages the real cause of wars is the pressure of population.

Thou shalt be only the apparent cause,<sup>30</sup>  
 -O Savyasachin.<sup>31</sup>

33

Do thou also kill Drona and Bheeshma and Jayadratha and Karna as also the other warrior heroes, already killed by Me. Do not be afraid thou wilt conquer thy enemies. Fight.

34

Sanjaya spoke :

Hearing this speech of Keshava, Arjuna, a-trembling, with palms joined, saluting and bending down said this again, in very great fear, in a voice that trembled with emotion.

35

Arjuna spoke :

O Hrishikesh, rightly dost the world by proclaiming Thee, rejoiceth and becometh attached to Thee. The *rakshasas* fly to every quarter in fear. All the bands of *siddhas* bow to Thee.

36

O Mahatma, endless, Lord of the Devas, Abode of the Universe, first cause, greater than *Brahma* himself, why should they not bow to Thee, the phenomenal, noumenal and super noumenal<sup>32</sup> and the changeless?

37

O Form Endless, Thou art the origin of the *devas*, the eternal *Purusha*,<sup>33</sup> into whom the universe dissolves, the knower and the known.

30. The efficient cause is always God.

31. One who can shoot arrows both with the right and left hand.

32. According to *Sankhya*, *Prakriti* and *Purusha* between them account for everything. The *Geeta* adds a third, the super-noumenal, the *Purushottama*.

33. The same as super-noumenal.

the supreme dwelling<sup>34</sup> place, by whom the universe is pervaded. 88

Thou art the wind, the regulator, the fire, the moon, the water, Prajapati,<sup>35</sup> great-grandsire, hail, hail to Thee, a thousand times all hail, hail unto Thee, again and again. 89

I bow to Thee from the front and from the back. I bow to Thee from all sides; boundless in power, measureless in strength, Thou art. Thou dost pervade all, Thou art all in all.<sup>36</sup> 40

O Achyuta,<sup>37</sup> if unaware<sup>38</sup> of this Thy majesty, taking you but for a friend and out of fondness and misconception, I have addressed Thee as 'O Krishna, O Yadava, O Friend,' carelessly, 41

and in all that, I have jested with Thee in irreverence at play, reposing, sitting, or at meals, alone or before friends, I beseech Thee to forgive me, O Thou Boundless One. 42

O Thou of matchless influence, Thou art the father of the animate and inanimate beings, therefore worthier of reverence than the

34. As that into whom the universe dissolves, it is the supreme dwelling place.

35. *Brahma*, the creator, is called the grandsire, Prajapati. Even he is God's creation. Therefore, God is the great-grandsire.

36. A European commentator has called this a noble couplet.

37. Sinless one.

38. With the ocular proof of the divinity of Shree Krishna, comes the realization with dramatic suddenness how familiar the relation has been between them which leads Arjuna to plead ignorance for the liberty he had taken.



spiritual<sup>39</sup> preceptor. There is none like Thee  
in the three worlds. 43

Therefore O God, to propitiate Thee I  
prostrate my body and do obeisance to Thee,  
as is fitting. As the father<sup>40</sup> forgives the son,  
the friend forgives his friend and the lover  
forgives the beloved, so do Thou forgive me. 44

O God, having seen what was never seen  
before, I am happy, but at the same time  
my mind is troubled by fears. Deign to show  
me Thy own form. Mercy, God of gods, Abode  
of the Universe. 45

I desire to see Thee as wearing the diadem  
and holding the mace and discus in your hand.<sup>41</sup>  
O thousand-handed, Vision of the Universe,  
do be in that four-handed form. 46

### The Holy One spoke :

O Arjuna, I have been pleased to show you  
this My radiant, infinite, original, supreme vision  
of the universe, by My creative power. Nobody  
excepting you has seen this before. 47

39. The reverence shown to the spiritual preceptor is the highest shown to man.

40. The Hindu worshippers worship God as father, friend, lover, etc., hoping to realize Him by the strongest attachment of love that according to one's nature a person can develop. And where there is true love forgiveness comes easy.

41. The discus is the special weapon of Shree Krishna. He is also usually represented as wearing a diadem and holding a mace.

O Kurupraveera,<sup>42</sup> neither by the *Vedas*, nor by sacrifices, nor by study, nor by alms, nor by works, nor by sharp austerity can anybody except you see this form of Mine in this world.<sup>43</sup> 48

Be thou not afraid or bewildered to behold this My dreadful form. Without fear and rejoicing in thy heart, behold this My familiar form again. 49

Sanjaya spoke:

Vasudeva having thus spoken to Arjuna again manifested His own form and consoled the terrified one, the Mahatma assuming again His pleasing form. 50

Arjuna spoke:

O Janardana, beholding again this Thy peaceful human form, I have now regained my mind and have been restored to my own nature. 51

The Holy One spoke:

This form of Mine that thou hast seen is very difficult<sup>44</sup> to behold. Even the gods are always anxious to behold that form.<sup>45</sup> 52

Neither by the study of the *Vedas*, nor by mortifications, nor by almsgiving, nor by sacrifice

42. The best warrior amongst the Kurus.

43. The favour shown is unique and unprecedented, unmeritable by any means whatsoever.

44. Meaning that the privilege is difficult to obtain.

45. The privilege is denied to gods, even though they hanker after it.

can I be seen in such a form as thou hast  
seen Me in. 53

O Arjuna, it is only by single devotion that  
I, as such, can be perceived, known, and seen  
in essence and entered, O Parantapa. 54

O Pandava, he who works for Me, who  
deems Me as the supreme goodness, who is My  
devotee, who has renounced everything, who has  
no enemies<sup>46</sup> in all created beings, cometh unto  
Me. 55

*Thus. . . . . Viswarupa-Darsan-Yoga.*

46. This clause is very important. So long as you have even one enemy, there is bound to be enemy-jamming and your wireless set will not work, communion with God will be interfered with. See p. 16, l. 13.

## CHAPTER XII

### BHAKTI (DEVOTION)

Arjuna spoke :

Of those devotees, ever attuned, who worship Thee<sup>1</sup> and of those who worship the changeless *avyakta*,<sup>2</sup> who are the greater *yogis* ? 1

The Holy One spoke :

Those who, with mind fixed on Me, ever attuned, worship Me, endowed with supreme faith, are, in My opinion, the best *yogis*. 2

Those who worship the changeless, indefinite,<sup>3</sup> *avyakta*, omnipresent, fixed and stationary root cause,<sup>4</sup> incomprehensible,<sup>5</sup> 3

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This and the 15th chapter are the shortest, consisting of 20 couplets only, but the most important from the standpoint of religion. The question raised here is not whether God is personal or impersonal for He is both, but which is the better for worship. The answer given is that it is a matter for the personality of the worshipper. Faith depends on certain mental factors which are not the same in all individuals. It is a matter of individuality and adjustment.

1. Personal.
2. Impersonal.
3. Not directly spottable.
4. Persisting after the destruction of the phenomenal world and the re-creation of it.
5. Not fully understandable by the human mind.

regulating all the senses, regarding everything equally and always engaged in doing good to all<sup>6</sup> created beings—they too come unto Me. 4

Those whose minds are set on the *avyakta* suffer more, for the path of *avyakta* is difficult for those who are endowed with bodies.<sup>7</sup> 5

Those who repose all their actions on Me, intent on Me, worship meditating on Me, with single *yoga*, 6

I speedily lift them up from the ocean of dying<sup>8</sup> existence, O Partha, their minds being set on Me. 7

Set thy mind on Me; on Me let thy *buddhi* rest. Then on high thou shalt abide in Me, no doubt. 8

And if thou art not able to fix thy mind<sup>9</sup> firmly on Me, then try to reach Me by *abhyasa*-<sup>10</sup> *yoga*, O Dhananjaya. 9

6. The emphasis is laid by frequent repetition on the importance of having a universal love that makes enmity impossible, as a prerequisite for communion with God. See p. 32, l. 33.

7. Man being a combination of matter and mind, the conception of the pure mind apart from matter is exceedingly difficult for him to have.

8. Mortality. To be of one mind with the universal mind, is to transcend the material (hence mortal or changing) existence.

9. Concentration on abstract ideals is not possible for many of us, specially for those of an active nature. For such natures, work is more suitable.

10. Repeated attempts to concentrate the mind through reflexion.

Even if thou art unable to practise, be intent on My service.<sup>11</sup> Performing actions for My sake thou shalt attain success. 10.

If thou art not able to do even this, then taking refuge in union with Me and being self-controlled,<sup>12</sup> renounce all fruits of actions.<sup>13</sup> 11

For knowledge is better than practice,<sup>14</sup> religious contemplation<sup>15</sup> better than knowledge, renunciation<sup>16</sup> of fruits of actions better than religious contemplation; after renunciation comes peace. 12.

11. For such people work for the sake of God is commended. There is no attempt to press all into the same kind of worship. There is no harm in congregational worship if the flock consists of men of the same mental calibre, but to press all men into the same service irrespective of their ability to follow and believe in the service is to court disaster. In a country with very homogeneous people congregational service may be possible, but never for a heterogeneous people. The indescribable diversity of men in respect of their congenital corporeal constitutions led Hahnemann to individualize each separate case of illness and prescribe with great success. The recognition of the existence of the same diversity in the mental equipment of men led Hinduism to prescribe different methods, modes and forms, not only of the service but also of the personality of the godhead. Since no personality can fully represent God, any one is good enough if it satisfies the worshipper, for after all, it is only a symbol. But the essential thing in all worship is faith, devotion, self-control, purity and universal love. In the absence of these, the symbol alone is of little use.

12 & 13. Those who cannot work for God, may at least try to renounce the fruits of actions.

14. Preference is given to knowledge.

15. Though knowledge is better than practice, the realization of God through *dhyana* or contemplation is better than knowledge.

16. As the advocate of *Karmayoga*, the Geeta gives the highest preference to work, done from a sense of duty and without expectation of any reward. There is no peace so long as desire in the shape of expectation is present.

He who beareth no ill-will to any<sup>17</sup> created being, he who is friendly and compassionate, without attachment and egoism, balanced in pleasure and pain, forgiving, 18

ever content, attuned, self-controlled, resolute, with mind<sup>18</sup> and *buddhi*<sup>19</sup> dedicated to Me, and My devotee, is dear to Me. 14

He who does not cause anxiety<sup>20</sup> to others, nor allows others to make him anxious,<sup>21</sup> freed from the emotions of joy, anger, and fear, is dear to Me. 15

He who is dependent on nothing, is pure, with ability,<sup>22</sup> unconcerned, beyond feelings, renouncer of all undertakings, is My devotee and dear to Me. 16

He who neither enjoys, nor hates, nor grieves, nor loves, renounces both<sup>23</sup> good and evil and is full of devotion, is dear to Me. 17

17. The point is again brought forward that no worship is of any avail so long as you cannot completely give up ill-will.

18 & 19. Our mind and *buddhi*, that is that sense which makes us realize the difference between self and not-self, are responsible for our egoism. We never know God so long as we speculate on God. A complete surrender of the human intellect to faith is necessary for the realization of God, which is more a feeling than knowing. But faith is not blind. It is buttressed by knowledge which accepts the nobler hypothesis and realizes its own limitations. See p. 9, l. 5.

20 & 21. The man who gives up desires can neither cause, nor has, anxiety.

22. The poor man who has to renounce many things because he has not got them can claim no merit for his renunciation. The foxy "grapes are sour" renunciation is no renunciation.

23. We are asked here to imitate God in order to reach Him. God is above good and evil.

The same to friend and foe, as also to fame and ignominy, the same in cold and heat, pleasure and pain, bereft of all attachment, 18

the same to praise and blame, taciturn,<sup>24</sup> content anyhow,<sup>25</sup> with no fixed<sup>26</sup> abode, steady and full of devotion,—that man is dear to Me. 19

Verily, those who practise this ambrosia<sup>27</sup> of religion, aforesaid, with faith and supreme devotion to Me, are the most<sup>28</sup> dear to Me. 20

*Thus. . . . . Bhakti Yoga.*

24. When the understanding is good speech is unnecessary.

25. As a renouncer ought to be.

26. To have a fixed abode is to have an attachment.

27. Sweet and heavenly.

28. Slokas 13 to 19 tell us of the virtues which endear men to God. The practising of all these virtues makes a man dearest to God. But is it possible, humanly, to practise this sweet and heavenly religion? Yes, it is not only possible but has actually been done by men like Ramkrishna and others. Mahatma Gandhi says in his edition of the Geeta that he has been practising the religion of the Geeta for the last 40 years. He repudiates the suggestion that the religion of the Geeta is not a practical proposition in practical life. It is not much good, he says, if it cannot be practised in every-day life. Nobody can properly understand Mahatma Gandhi till he comes to know this secret of his life. He is a tough fighter but he fights from a sense of his duty to man and God and not for his own self. He has no enemies, nor friends. His deadliest enemies, so-called, would find him a willing helper when in trouble. His own friends, so-called, he mercilessly condemns, when they fail in their duty to man and God. He does not care for fame, honour, or blame. He is taciturn on fixed days, content anyhow, with great abilities but yet a renouncer, self-regulated, self-controlled, same in pleasure and pain, heat and cold, as is humanly possible, without egoism and bears no ill-will to anybody. He is a practical demonstration of the religion of the Geeta.



## CHAPTER XIII

### KSHETRA<sup>1</sup>-KSHETRAJNA<sup>2</sup>-BIBHAGA<sup>3</sup> (BODY-SOUL DIVISION)

The Holy One spoke :

O Kaunteya, this body is called *kshetra*. That which knows it is called *kshetrajna* by those learned in this. 1

O Bharata, know that in all *kshetras* (bodies) I am the *kshetrajna* (soul). In My opinion true knowledge is that which relates to *kshetra* and *kshetrajna* (body and soul). 2

Hear in brief from Me what *kshetra* is, what its nature, how it is changed and whence it comes, also what *kshetrajna* is and what his powers are.<sup>4</sup> 3

Chapter XII is important from the standpoint of religion and this chapter is important from the standpoint of science and philosophy, because it deals with matter and mind.

1. *Kshetra* means literally, field; ostensibly, the human body; really, matter; physically, congealed energy, subject to space-time limitation.

2. *Kshetrajna* means, literally, knower of the field; philosophically, mind; physically, the prime energy, not congealed and not subject to space-time limitation; theologically, God.

3. Division.

4. Matter, its nature, its origin and metamorphosis, as well as God and His powers are dealt with here.

The *rishis* have sung this in different verses and in different ways and in *Brahma-sutras*,<sup>5</sup> with incontestable reasonings.<sup>6</sup> 4

The *mahabhutas*<sup>7</sup> (five gross elements), *aham-kara* (consciousness of separate self), *buddhi* (sense), *avyakta* or *Mula Prakriti*, the ten *indriyas*, (organs of sense and action) and one mind, 5

like<sup>8</sup>-dislike, pleasure<sup>9</sup>-pain, the combined<sup>10</sup> body, energy,<sup>11</sup> retention,<sup>12</sup>—these briefly stated constitute *kshetra* with its modifications.<sup>13</sup> 6

Humility, unpretentiousness, harmless, forgiveness, simplicity, serving the preceptor, purity, patience, self-control, 7

indifference to sense-objects, and also unconsciousness of self, realization of the pain and evil of birth, death, old age, and sickness, 8

unattachment, unconcern for wife, son or home, ever same in mind whether good or evil befell them, 9

5. *Vedanta-sutras*.

6. The underlying philosophy.

7. The five states of matter, solid, liquid, gaseous, radiant, ethereal. See p. 26. It would be appreciated now that what we now call different matter is the different combinations of protons and electrons, while the first three states of matter are due to the intermolecular attraction or repulsion. Radiation is different, while ether is not yet cognizable by science.

8. Attraction-repulsion.

9. Conduction and resistance.

10. Aggregation of matter.

11. Liveliness.

12. Holding together.

13. Different attributes or qualities.

true devotion to Me by single *yoga*, resort to sequestered places, disinclination towards men's company, 10

constancy in spiritual knowledge, insight into the value of real knowledge—these have been called the real<sup>14</sup> knowledge, all else being ignorance. 11

I will declare that which ought to be known, knowing which salvation is obtained—the beginningless Supreme Brahma,<sup>15</sup> called neither being,<sup>16</sup> nor not-being.<sup>17</sup> 12

Having hands and feet everywhere, eyes, heads and mouths everywhere, and all-hearing, it dwells in the world, covering all.<sup>18</sup> 13

With sense-perceptions of all the senses, though devoid of all sense-organs, unattached yet maintaining all and though devoid of qualities yet enjoying them,<sup>19</sup> 14

14. A knowledge of the virtues has been here called real knowledge, because it leads us to the knowledge of God, the end of all life. Any knowledge that takes us away from God is ignorance, because it knows not what ought to be known. Undoubtedly, from the standpoint of religion this is the right angle of vision.

15. The description of the supreme *Brahma* or soul here has been taken almost verbatim from the *Upanishads*.

16, 17. 'Neither being, nor not-being' occurs in *Rikveda* 10, 129. It means that God is neither phenomenal, nor *avyakta*. He is above both.

18. Sloka 13 means that God is all-doing, all-seeing, all-thinking, all-speaking, all-hearing and omnipresent.

19. The first part of this has been taken from *Svetaswara Upanishad* 3, 17.

within<sup>20</sup> and without<sup>21</sup> all beings, animate and inanimate, unknowable because of His subtlety,<sup>22</sup> far away and near too, 15

united<sup>23</sup> in all beings and yet appearing as divided, known as the supporter of beings, destroyer and creator, 16

the radiance of everything bright,<sup>24</sup> called 'beyond darkness',<sup>25</sup> the knowledge, the thing to be known, the thing which can be reached by knowledge alone, He resides in the heart of all.<sup>26</sup> 17

Thus *kshetra*, knowledge and the object of knowledge have been briefly declared. Knowing this My devotees partake of My nature.<sup>27</sup> 18

Know that *Prakriti* and *Purusha* are both without beginning;<sup>28</sup> and know also that qualities<sup>29</sup> and their degenerations<sup>30</sup> arise from *Prakriti*. 19

20. As soul, God is in all beings.

21. As the supreme soul, He is in no being.

22. Human mind cannot conceive of anything that is beyond the phenomenal and noumenal. Any big thing is near and far away, if you measure its distance from you to the two extremities.

23. Both synthetic and analytic.

24. This occurs in *Brihadaranyaka* 4, 4, 16.

25. This occurs in *Svetasvatara* 3, 8.

26. As the soul who feels.

27. Becomes like Me.

28. According to *Sankhya*, *Prakriti* and *Purusha* are both without beginning and uncreated. The Vedantist says that *Prakriti* is God's creation, therefore, not uncreated, but its beginning not being known, it is beginningless.

29, 30. The *gunas* and their changes are due to *Prakriti*.

In the generation<sup>31</sup> of the body and the sense-organs, *Prakriti* is called the cause. *Purusha*<sup>32</sup> is called the cause of experiencing pleasure and pain. 20

Because *Purusha* residing in *Prakriti* experiences the qualities,<sup>33</sup> the product of *Prakriti*, attachment to the qualities determines<sup>34</sup> births in good or bad families. 21

In this body the *Purusha* leads a separate<sup>35</sup> existence, because he has been called the witness, acquiescer, nourisher<sup>36</sup> and maintainer and the great Lord, the Supreme Soul. 22

He who thus knows the *Purusha* and *Prakriti* with the qualities, in whatever condition he may be, he has not again to transmigrate.<sup>37</sup> 23

Some by introspection discover the soul in themselves by the mind;<sup>38</sup> others by *Sankhya*<sup>39</sup> and *yoga*,<sup>40</sup> and still others by *Karmayoga*.<sup>41</sup> 24

31. The cause of the mechanical part of the body is *Prakriti*.

32. Feelings are due to *Purusha*.

33. *Sattwa*, *raja* and *tama*.

34. The characteristics are inheritable according to the law of nature.

35. Mind and matter always keep their individuality.

36. Enjoyer of nourishment.

37. His training is completed and he has not to go back for a refresher course. See p. 11, l. 19.

38. Psychologists.

39. Philosophers.

40. Spiritualists.

41. Followers of the Geeta.

Others<sup>42</sup> too, not knowing this, hearing it of others, meditate on it; and these also transcend death, following the instructions. 25

Whatsoever being comes to exist, animate or inanimate, know thou, O Bharatarshava, that it arises from the union of *Purusha* and *Prakriti*.<sup>43</sup> 26

He who discovers the Supreme God, present equally in all beings, unperishing with the perishable, has the true vision.<sup>44</sup> 27

Because, discovering everywhere indeed the same Supreme God equally dwelling, he does not nullify<sup>45</sup> his own soul by his self, and thus follows the highest path. 28

He who discovers that in every way it is *Prakriti* working that does the work, the Spirit unparticipating, has the true insight.<sup>46</sup> 29

When he perceives the diversified existence of beings in one, and spreading forth from it, then he attains to *Brahma*.<sup>47</sup> 30

42. The disciples of the foregoing.

43. Emulsion of mind and matter. See p. 10, l. 14.

Intimate mixture but not soluble.

44. The apparent changes are the creation of *maya*. As soon as this is realized, the scales fall off from our eyes and we see the unchanging principle underlying all the changes.

45. Everybody is his own enemy till he discovers God in every body.

46. What we call work is phenomenal and hence comes under the domain of *Prakriti*.

47. To know *Brahma* is to be *Brahma*, because it comes from the realization of the essential unity of the soul and the Supreme Soul, from which all things have been created and into which all things will be absorbed.

Being without a beginning and destitute of qualities, the undecaying Supreme Soul, though residing in the body, O Kaunteya, neither works nor is attached. 81

Just as the all-pervading ether, because of its subtlety, is not attached anywhere, so the soul pervading the whole body, is nowhere attached.<sup>48</sup> 82

Just as the one sun illuminates the whole world, so the occupier of *kshetra* illuminates the whole of it, O Bharata. 83

Those who perceive this difference between *kshetra* and *kshetrajna* by the eyes of knowledge,<sup>49</sup>

48. The space intervening between the proton and electron is filled with or pervaded by ether. The remarkable thing about this ether is that the electron in jumping from one orbit to another loses neither energy, nor time. The subtlety of the ether is as great as that of the mind.

49. To truly appreciate the difference between mind (spirit) and matter is not possible by the senses. It has to be done by the mind, by inference and introspection but never by physical or scientific proof. Two things which have nothing in common cannot be related by any thing. This is the argument that has led to the supposition that there must be something common to both mind and matter. Both are forms of energy, mind being uncongealed and free from space-time limitation, and matter being congealed and subject to space-time limitation. Any thing outside space-time, is not cognizable by science but mind is free from such limitations. How can we, therefore, have knowledge of mind? But all knowledge is really made possible by the mind. The senses do not know, it is the mind that really knows. The inevitable conclusion, therefore, is that it is mind that exists and not matter which is an illusion, caused by mind having attached itself to the space-time continuum. What we call creation is the investment of mind with space-time relation. True liberation comes when the mind can divest itself of this limitation, but with that divestment it goes outside the pale of the senses. Can

and the nature of beings and their liberation,<sup>50</sup>  
attain the highest. 84

*Thus . . . . . Kshetra-Kshetrajna Bibhaya Yoga.*

any man have glimpses of what is outside space-time? It seems possible for a man to have experience outside space-time. It happens when the sense-organs are lulled, as they are during sleep and *yoga*. What sleeps in us is the space-time relation and that is why dreams are devoid of them, partially at least, but sufficiently to give us some idea as to how matter behaves freed from the space-time relation. In *yoga* the mind is able to effect a junction between the soul and the Supreme Soul, independently of time and space.

50. That is liberation in the truest sense, liberation from the tyranny of the senses and hence of matter.



## CHAPTER XIV

### [GUNATRAYA BIBHAGA (TRI-QUALITY DIVISION)]

The Holy One spoke :

I will again declare to thee that best and supreme<sup>1</sup> knowledge of all knowledge, knowing which all the *munis* have attained salvation. 1

Holding on to this knowledge and obtaining<sup>2</sup> My nature, people have not to be reborn at the time of creation, neither to suffer<sup>3</sup> at the time of dissolution. 2

In Chapter XIII *Kshetra* and *Kshetrajna*, or matter and mind have been discussed once in the light of the *Vedanta* and again according to *Sankhya*. In it, it has been said that matter, presided over by *Prakriti*, does the work, and mind presided over by God, quiescently experiences the feeling. It is here explained how *Prakriti* works. All creation is a combination of mind and matter and destruction is their separation. The proportion of mind and matter in all created beings varying, gives us a graded series of beings. At one end are beings who are almost pure mind and matterless. At the other extreme are beings who are almost pure matter, mindless. But as our senses can have no experience of pure mind or pure matter, we have always to deal with their combinations. The combination of matter and mind is an unstable equilibrium called life in which both exhibit their different tendencies at different times. The state in which mind predominates is called *sattwa* or presence. The state of joint exhibition is *raja*, or presence-absence, and the state in which matter predominates is called *tama* or absence of mind or light, i.e., darkness.

1. This knowledge is supreme because it gives us salvation.

2. Becoming immortal.

3. Both birth and death entailing an effort are supposed to be painful.

The great *Brahma*<sup>4</sup> is My womb wherein I place the germ, whence originate all beings. 3

O Kaunteya, of all the forms that are born of the different wombs, the great *Brahma* is the womb and I the fertilizing father.<sup>5</sup> 4

O Mahabahu, *sattwa*, *raja* and *tama*, these qualities originate from *Prakriti* and bind<sup>6</sup> the eternal soul in the body. 5

O Anagha, because of its transparent virtue, illuminating and peaceful, *sattwa* binds there with the company of happiness and knowledge.<sup>7</sup> 6

Know thou that *raja* as provoking passion and born of attachment and thirst for life, O Kaunteya, binds the soul with the company of work.<sup>8</sup> 7

O Bharata, *tama*, know thou, as deluding, born of ignorance and hence binding the soul with carelessness, inertia and sleepiness.<sup>9</sup> 8

O Bharata, *sattwa* leads to happiness, *raja* to work but *tama* leads indeed to carelessness by enveloping knowledge.<sup>10</sup> 9

4. The great *Brahma* here means *Prakriti*.

5. Almost a repetition of the preceding couplet.

6. The union of mind and matter gives rise to the three states.

7. The preponderance of mind results in peace, happiness and knowledge.

8. All work has to be done by mind and matter together, motivated by the desire to keep on the union which is life. The unstable equilibrium requires much ado to preserve it. See p. 10, l. 13.

9. The leaden existence which screens off the radiant mind.

10. A summing-up of the preceding three couplets.

O Bharata, *sattwa* prevails by overpowering *raja* and *tama*, *raja* by overpowering *sattwa* and *tama*, and *tama* by overpowering *sattwa* and *raja*, likewise.<sup>11</sup> 10

When in all the sense-organs of this body knowledge illuminates, know that *sattwa* is dominating.<sup>12</sup> 11

Avidity, propensity, incitement to work, restlessness and covetousness are produced when *raja* is on the increase, O Bharatarshava,<sup>13</sup> 12

O Kurunandana, dullness, disinclination, carelessness and delusion are generated when *tama* is on the increase.<sup>14</sup> 13

But if a being dies when *sattwa* is on the increase, then he attains to the spotless domain of the good worshippers.<sup>15</sup> 14

Dying when *raja* is on the increase, he attains to the company of the workers; dying when *tama* is on the increase, he is born likewise in the womb of the deluded.<sup>16</sup> 15

11. The three are mutually exclusive, none having permanent dominance.

12. Here follows the diagnostic symptomology of the three states.

13. A catalogue of the animal springs of action.

14. A catalogue of the brakes on action.

15. The reference is to the belief that what one thinks of at the time of death is what he attains after death. Real knowledge is the knowledge of God which comes from the state of *sattwa* and leads to the right worship of God.

16. The deluded are the lower order of beings in whom the proportion of mind to matter is small.

It is said that the result of a good man's action is pure, *sattwa* predominating; unhappiness<sup>17</sup> is the result of the action of those in whom *raja* predominates, and ignorance in case of *tama*. 16

From *sattwa* results knowledge and from *raja*, greed. And from *tama* result ignorance, carelessness and delusion. 17

People endowed with *sattwa* go to heaven; those with *raja*, people the earth. Those with *tama*, endowed with the worst propensities, go to hell.<sup>18</sup> 18

When one realises that none but these qualities are the workers<sup>19</sup> and knows Him who is above<sup>20</sup> them, he partakes of My attributes. 19

When the soul transcends these three qualities born of the body, it attains to immortality, freed

17. Matter is circumscribed by time and space and hence limited. Mind, free from such limitations, is capable of an indefinite expansion and is, therefore, not cramped by selfishness. When mind preponderates, selfishness disappears and our efforts are directed to the good of all and hence become pure. *Raja* which is limited to self can never have the happiness of the unselfish.

18. This is taken from *Sankhyakarika*. Heaven may be merited by the *sattwika* people but heaven is not the end either of *Sankhya* or of the *Geeta*. The end is salvation which, according to *Sankhya*, is possible only when one is in the *sattwa* state and realizes the difference between *Prakriti* and *Purusha*. According to the *Geeta*, salvation comes only to him who realizes that *Brahma* who not only transcends the three *gunas* but also *Prakriti* and *Purusha*.

19. What we ordinarily understand by work is governed by the laws of nature or *Prakriti* and is mechanistic, but there is One who is above them.

20. The mechanism relates to matter, the body, but not to the soul which transcends it.

from the unhappiness of birth, death and sickness. 20

Arjuna spoke:

O Master, what are the characteristics of him who transcends these three qualities? How does he behave and transcend these three qualities? 21

The Holy One spoke:

He hates not, O Pandava, the spontaneous working of *sattwa*, *raja* and *tama*, neither does he wish for their suspension.<sup>21</sup> 22

He sits unconcerned, unmoved by the qualities and does not budge, realizing that the qualities must do their allotted work,<sup>22</sup> 23

same in pleasure and pain, self-reliant, same to a lump of earth, stone and gold, same to friend or foe, steady, same to praise or blame given to him, 24

same to honour and dishonour, to allies and enemies, forsaker of all urges,—he is called transcender of qualities. 25

Verily he who worships Me by the *yoga* of single devotion, attains salvation by completely transcending all these qualities.<sup>23</sup> 26

21. To transcend the *gunas*, and their consequent sufferings or limitations, we have to take the sting out of them by a deep insight.

22. It can only be done by realizing God.

23. To ignore them it is necessary that the whole of your attention should be devoted to the study or worship of Him who is above them.

For in Me resides the Brahma,<sup>24</sup> as also the undecaying, immortal and immemorial religion and unending bliss. 27

*Thus . . . . . Gunatraya Bibhaga Yoga.*

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24. The constantly changing phenomenal world can give you no sure and permanent foothold whereby you can anchor yourself and be steady. You will only be the sports of the winds if you pin your faith on the laws of nature, *Prakriti*. Beneath the superficial and changing phenomenal world lies the deep and firm bedrock, *Brahma*, immutable and undecaying, which alone can give you the surest anchorage against the storm-tossed life on earth.

His worship, the due observance of His laws, will give you that supreme joy which knows no surfeit.

## CHAPTER XV

### PURUSHOTTAMA

The Holy One spoke :

He is learned in the *Vedas* who reads the riddle of an indestructible *ashvattha*<sup>1</sup> tree, roots up, branches down, the leaves the *Vedas*, it is said. 1

Its branches spreading up and down, nourished by the qualities<sup>2</sup> and budding forth sense-objects, the<sup>3</sup> adventitious roots going down bind the men of the world to actions.<sup>4</sup> 2

Its form cannot be realised on this earth, neither its beginning, nor its end, nor how it

In this chapter creation has been compared to a tree originating from God, an old conception that is to be found in many an ancient literature. Later, the nature of the Supreme Being, *Purushottama*, is described.

1. The *ashvattha* tree is *Ficus Religiosa*. According to some it is the *pipul* tree. Some have taken *ashvattha* to mean 'that which does not last beyond tomorrow', that is evanescent. That meaning cannot be reconciled with the adjective, 'indestructible'. The meaning of the whole couplet is that you have read the *Vedas* in vain if you have not understood that the root cause of all was God.

2 & 3. The three states of *sattwa*, *raja* and *tama*, arising out of the union of mind and matter are vitally necessary for the continuance of creation and led to the evolution of the sense-organs.

4. The qualities and the sense-organs give rise to the springs of actions.

rests.<sup>5</sup> Cutting down this strongly rooted *ashvattha* by the strong weapon of detachment, 3

the search is to be made for that position, reaching which one has not to transmigrate again and the determination is to be taken to reach the original *Purusha* from whom have issued forth the ancient propensities.<sup>6</sup> 4

Bereft of pride and delusion, conquering the weakness of attachment, spiritually constant, freed of desires, freed from the clash of such antithesis known as pleasure and pain, they reach, undeluded, the eternal place. 5

Neither<sup>7</sup> the sun, nor the moon, nor fire can light up that place. That supreme place is Mine from which nobody transmigrates.<sup>8</sup> 6

A portion of Mine becomes the immortal soul of the living world, attracts to itself the senses of which the heart is the sixth, invested in *Prakriti*.<sup>9</sup> 7

Just as the wind takes away with it the fragrance from their places, so the soul takes

5. Man, constituted as he is, can scarcely comprehend how the creation started, or how it will end, or how it is maintained.

6. If we want to reach the Creator, we must creep up the tree by first cutting down the bonds that pin us to the earth and make a determined effort to reach the seed from which the tree has sprung up.

7. That root cause is subtler than radiant energy.

8. And not subject to either phenomenal or noumenal changes.

9. Mind and matter, joined together, cause knowing and feeling.



away with it from one body to another the senses when it transmigrates.<sup>10</sup> 8

Enshrined in the ear, eye, skin, tongue and nose and the heart, it perceives the objects of the senses.<sup>11</sup> 9

The ignorant cannot see the soul which transmigrates, or resides in the body, or perceives sense-objects, or which is invested with the sense-organs, but the eye of knowledge can.<sup>12</sup> 10

Some of the earnest *yogis* perceive it in their bodies but not the unintelligent, nor the impious, though earnest.<sup>13</sup> 11

The radiant energy that is in the sun and that which is in the moon and in the fire, are from Me, know thou.<sup>14</sup> 12

10. The transference of the imperceptible equipment from one being to another, both inherited and acquired, is a subtle process.

11. The sense-organs by themselves are incapable of sensing unless joined with the mind.

12. The working of the mind is not physically demonstrable. It must always remain an inference.

13. For the realization of the mind in us, as a separate entity, apart from matter, two things are necessary. Firstly, one must be a *yogi*, that is, he must have in him a preponderance of mind over matter. Secondly, he must be pious, that is, he must have no evil thoughts against anybody, the 'enemy-jamming'. In the absence of these two, no amount of earnest endeavour, scientific or otherwise, will enable you to discover the mind in you as a separate entity.

14. The poet now turns from the created to the Creator. The poet has just said that the Creator was above radiant energy. He now gives the reason why. The radiant energies are His creation and flow from Him.

And by My energy, embracing the earth,  
I sustain<sup>15</sup> created beings. I nourish all the  
*oshadhīs*, being the juicy *soma*.<sup>16</sup> 13

I digest<sup>17</sup> the four kinds of food entering  
the bodies of living beings vested with *pran*<sup>18</sup> and  
*apan*,<sup>19</sup> as hunger. 14

I am established in the heart<sup>20</sup> of all.  
From Me come memory and knowledge and their  
loss.<sup>21</sup> Worthy to be known by all the *Vedas*  
am Myself.<sup>22</sup> I<sup>23</sup> am the *Vedas* and the author  
of the *Vedantas*. 15

There are two *Purushas* in this world, *Kshara*  
and *Akshara*. *Kshara* is all the created being.  
That which is at the root of all that is called  
*Akshara*. 16

15. This sustentation of the universe cannot be explained by the physical law of nature, *Prakriti*. The second law of thermodynamics stands in the way. The running down of the universe is prevented by the accession of an energy from outside nature, just as an outside energy is required for the maximum organisation at the beginning. See p. 7, l. 4.

16. The watery moon.

17. Digestion is not entirely a physiological process. The mind has a great deal to do with it.

18 & 19. The inspired and expired gases. The rate of oxygenation has a lot to do with digestion. The reference, therefore, is pertinent.

20. The feeling is impossible materially. Mind alone makes it possible.

21. All the psychical processes.

22. A knowledge of God is the end of the *Vedas*.

23. The *Vedas* and the *Vedantas* are the works of prophets who received inspiration from God. See p. 15, l. 27. and p. 19, l. 1.

The *Supreme Purusha* is different<sup>24</sup> from these, called the *Supreme Soul*, the indestructible God, who pervading the worlds, sustains them. 17

Since I am beyond *Kshara* and superior to *Akshara*, therefore am I called *Purushottama* both in the *Vedas* and on the earth. 18

He who undeluded knows Me as the *Purushottama*, knows all and worships Me in every way, O Bharata. 19

O Anagha, this most secret teaching I have declared to thee. Knowing this men can be wise and successful. 20

*Thus . . . . . Purushottama.*

24. It is here that the Geeta fundamentally differs from *Sankhya*. According to *Sankhya*, *Prakriti* and *Purusha* explained everything. The Geeta subordinates both to a higher being, the highest, *Purushottama*.

## CHAPTER XVI

### DAIVASURA<sup>1</sup> SAMPAD BIBHAGA (DAIVASURA HERITAGE DIVISION)

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#### The Holy One spoke :

Fearlessness, cheerfulness of mind, centered  
in *jnan-yoga*,<sup>2</sup> alms-giving, self-restraint and  
sacrifice, *Brahma-yajna*,<sup>3</sup> *tapa*, simplicity, 1

harmlessness, truth, angerlessness, renuncia-  
tion, tranquillity, unmaliciousness, benevolence  
towards beings, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty,  
gravity, 2

vigour, forgiveness, patience, purity, freedom  
from vindictiveness and from too much conceit

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This chapter is important from the standpoint of ethics and eugenics. 'Human nature being what it is' is often an argument against righteousness. See p. 3, l. 8. Human nature has a long range from 'beastly' to 'godly' according to the dominance of matter and mind. The laws of heredity refer to the matter of the body and not to mind which is independent of time and space. What are ordinarily called mental traits depend very greatly on the inheritance of the proportion of mind and matter. The more mind in us, the higher we are in the scale of evolution and the greater are we educable. Breeding with the object of increasing the proportion of mind in us, we can certainly rise rapidly in the scale. The point to remember is that we are never wholly matter, that in us always resides a spark of God, the universal mind, an appeal to whom never goes in vain in acquiring an ascendancy over matter.

1. *Daiva* means Godly or divine. *Asura* means beastly or demoniacal.

2. That is, practising enlightened *Karmayoga*.

3. Reading of the *Pada*s.

—these are the divine virtues of those born to them, O Bharata. 3

Boastfulness, pride, conceit, and anger and harshness and ignorance are the demoniacal inheritance of those born to them, O Partha. 4

The divine virtues inherited are deemed to be for salvation,<sup>4</sup> the demoniacal for bondage.<sup>5</sup> Grieve not, O Pandava, thou art born to the divine heritage. 5

In this world there are two kinds of created beings, divine and demoniacal. The divine have been described at length; hear from Me, O Partha, of the demoniacal. 6

The demoniacal people know neither the urge for the right course, nor the restraint from the wrong one; nor purity, nor behaviour,<sup>6</sup> nor truth are in them. 7

They say "the universe is truthless,<sup>7</sup> proofless, godless; what else can it be but generation from mating of the opposite sexes, caused by lust?"<sup>8</sup> 8

Adopting this view, the depraved, the little-minded, ferocious workers, the inimical, are born for the ruination<sup>9</sup> of the world. 9

4. Salvation is escape from the tyranny of matter.

5. Enslavement to matter.

6. Good behaviour.

7. Inconsistent.

8. To animals, there is nothing superior to animality, rationality being absent.

9. These are the forces of destruction.

Clinging to insatiable desires, full of arrogance, conceit and vanity, taking to evil ways through<sup>10</sup> delusion, they adopt evil resolutions. 10

Thinking<sup>11</sup> lifelong thoughts unlimited, regarding the gratification of desires as the highest felicity, convinced that that is the sum total,<sup>12</sup> 11

tied by a hundred bonds of hopes, given to lust and anger, they desire the acquisition by unlawful means of wealth for sensual gratification. 12

"I have acquired this to-day, that mind's desire I shall have; this I have and that much wealth I shall have again; I have killed this my enemy, others again I shall kill too; I am the Lord, enjoying, successful; I am strong, happy, rich; I am of noble birth, who is there like me? I will give alms in sacrifice, I will rejoice;<sup>13</sup>"—thus the deluded, ignorant, bewildered by diverse thoughts, shrouded in the web of delusion, attached to the gratification of desires, gravitate into foul hell. 13-16

Self-glorifying, immodest, filled with the intoxication of pride and wealth, they worship offering sacrifices nominally, violating the rules. 17

10. This is important because it shows that they do not take to evil ways as a matter of course, that is mechanically. They would not, if their mistakes were properly pointed out.

11. They have no peace. The whole of their life is spent in scheming and plotting and counter-plotting.

12. The be-all and end-all of life.

13. Written thousands of years ago, the mentality depicted here is to be found even to-day.

Attached to egoism, power, insolence, lust, and anger, the slanderers hate Me<sup>14</sup> who am in their bodies as well as in those of others. 18

The slanderers, revengeful, vile human dregs of the world, I fling uninterruptedly<sup>15</sup> into the wombs of the demons. 19

O Kaunteya, these deluded fools, transmigrating again and again into the wombs of the demons and unreaching Me, thence degenerate further.<sup>16</sup> 20

Lust, anger and avarice are the three soul-destroying doors to hell. Therefore, these three should be renounced. 21

O Kaunteya, freed from these three doors of *tama*, men behave for their self-betterment<sup>17</sup> and afterwards obtain salvation. 22

He who forsaking<sup>18</sup> scriptural rules leads a wilful life, gains neither success, nor happiness, nor salvation. 23

14. As part of the universal mind, God resides in all of us, good or bad. The good by subordinating their bodily needs to the mind, behave rationally. The bad by subjugating the mind by the body, behave animally.

15. The degeneration of the rational into the animal is a continuous process.

16. From degenerated men they become actually animals.

17. Just as the bad men go down deeper and deeper into hell, so the good men rise higher and higher till they reach salvation, once they are outside the soul-destroying portals of lust, anger and avarice.

18. It is not only a great deal of strain to judge for oneself each individual action but it is impossible for many. The scriptures are a great help to success, happiness, and salvation.

Therefore, for the discrimination<sup>19</sup> of right actions from wrong, the scriptures are your guide. Thou shouldst do thy duty after learning<sup>20</sup> what the scriptural ordinances say. 24

*Thus . . . . . Daivasura Sampad Bibhaga Yoga.*

19. Points out where the value of the scriptures lies.

20. But unless you are acquainted with the scriptures you cannot use it in time of need. Hence the necessity of learning them.



## CHAPTER XVII

### SHRADDHATRAYA BIBHAGA (THREE DEVOTION-DIVISIONS)

Arjuna spoke:

O Krishna, what verily is the position<sup>1</sup> of those who worship full of devotion but not in accordance with the scriptural ordinances? Is it *sattwa*, *raja* or *tama*? 1

The Holy One spoke:

Man's devotion is of three kinds, as naturally<sup>2</sup> inherited—*sattwika*, *rajasi* and *tamasi*. Hear thou of these. 2

O Bharata, every man's devotion follows his qualities.<sup>3</sup> He is all<sup>4</sup> devotion. He is what his devotion<sup>5</sup> makes him. 3

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The previous chapter concluded by saying that the scriptural ordinances should be followed. The question now raised by Arjuna is, not what would happen to one who worshipped with devotion though not according to the scriptural ordinances, but how such people should be classified with respect to the three classes: *sattwika*, *rajasi* and *tamasi*.

1. Position here means position with respect to the *gunas*.
2. The emphasis here laid is on the great part played by nature or *Prakriti* which has sovereign rights over the matter of the body.
3. Qualities here do not mean the *gunas* but the inherited traits or characters.
4. All the actions of a man are subordinated to his devotion.
5. Devotion here is almost equivalent to belief. Every one of us acts on his belief. Some believe in money, others in position, fame, goodness, salvation or gratification of the senses and each one's life is guided by his belief.

Those of the nature of *sattwa* worship the *devas*,\* those with *raja*, the *yakshas*<sup>7</sup> and *rakshasas*.<sup>8</sup> Other men of the nature of *tama* worship ghosts<sup>9</sup> and the departed souls. 4

Those who practise severe *tapa*<sup>10</sup> in contravention of the scriptural rules, wedded to vanity and egoism, full of lust, anger and solicitations, 5

senseless, tormenting all the materials of the body and also Me,<sup>11</sup> residing inside their body—know these as of demoniacal mentality. 6

The favourite dishes of men are also of three kinds, as also sacrifices, *tapa* and alms-giving. Hear from Me the differences between them. 7

The dishes<sup>12</sup> dear to the *sattwikis* augment longevity, energy, strength, resistance to diseases,

6. The forces allied to God and goodness.

7. Mammons.

8. Brute force.

9. Ignorance and superstition.

10. The practice of *tapa* gives one superhuman powers. When directed towards the good of mankind and ultimate salvation its practice is commendable. But superhuman powers are coveted also by those who want self-aggrandisement and self-gratification and these go to the extreme lengths of endurance and suffering for the sake of acquiring such superhuman powers, e.g., the scientists who prostitute their abilities to the forces of destruction.

11. Such people forget that their sufferings in the cause of destruction cause sufferings to God who resides in and feels with them.

12. The superiority of the Geeta over other religions is forcefully exhibited here, for unlike other religions, instead of prohibiting or recommending any particular food, it goes to the root cause and discovers what causes the predilections for particular foods. Fresh fruits and fresh milk, which almost exclusively formed the foods of the ancient *rishis*, are now considered by common consent as the ideal food, ensuring long and disease-free life.

satisfaction and appetite and are juicy, 'rich, nourishing and hearty. 8

The dishes liked by the *rajasis* are extremely bitter,<sup>13</sup> sour, saline, hot, poor, pungent and irritating, producing pain, grief and sickness. 9

The food dear to the *tamasis* is stale,<sup>14</sup> dried up, and putrid, also the leavings<sup>15</sup> and high meat.<sup>16</sup> 10

That sacrifice which is offered in accordance with the rules,<sup>17</sup> bearing well in mind that sacrifices are to be offered without expecting any result,<sup>18</sup> is *sattwika* sacrifice. 11

O Bharatashrestha,<sup>19</sup> know that that sacrifice is *rajasik* which is offered aiming at the result and for self-glorification too. 12

That sacrifice that is offered against rules, sans food-gifts,<sup>20</sup> sans recompense,<sup>21</sup> sans prayers, sans devotion, is called *tamasik*. 13

To worship *devas*, *Brahmanas*, preceptors and wise men, to be pure and simple and to practise

13. The most frequent cause of dyspepsia, as the doctor will tell you, is the abuse of bitters, acids, salt and hot spices.

14. Stale, dried up and putrid food are very poor in vitamins.

15. The leavings from the tables are a source of infection.

16. And high meat, of ptomaine poisoning.

17. Scriptural ordinances.

18. One of the cardinal doctrines of the Geeta.

19. The best of Indians.

20. Without feeding some.

21. Without payments to the priests.

*Brahmacharyya* and non-violence, are called bodily *tapas*. 14

Speech causing no anxiety, truthful, agreeable and profitable, practising the reading of the scriptures—these are called the *tapa* of speech. 15

Cheerfulness of mind, equanimity, silence, self-control, rectitude in dealings—these are called the *tapa* of the mind.<sup>22</sup> 16

The threefold *tapa*, performed with the utmost devotion, without expecting any result and with singleness of purpose, is called *sattvika tapa*. 17

*Tapa*, practised<sup>23</sup> for claptrap, honour and respect and for self-glorification, is called *rajasik*, being uncertain and fleeting. 18

The *tapa* that is undertaken under delusion for self-torture, or for the destruction of others, is called *tamasik*. 19

Alms<sup>24</sup> given for the sake of alms-giving and not to persons who do you a good turn but to a fit person at a time and in a place fittingly, is called *sattvika* alms-giving. 20

That which is given for the sake of getting a return, with a specific object or grudgingly, is called *rajasik* alms-giving. 21

22. Body, mind and language are a trio that figures largely in the Sanskrit language. The body, mind and language should be under control.

23. What in Hindusthani is called "nam-ka-wastey".

24. Relief should not only be gratuitous but should be to the right person and at the right time and place.

That alms which is given in a wrong place and at a wrong time to a wrong person, disrespectfully and contemptuously, is called *tamasik*.

22

'*Om tat sat*',<sup>25</sup> ('yes, that, goodness') these, as recorded, are the three kinds of reference to the Supreme Soul. By those references were the *Brahmanas*, *Vedas* and *Yajnas* created of old. 23

Therefore, the followers of the *Vedas* always commence their acts of sacrifice,<sup>26</sup> alms-giving and *tapa*, as laid down in their ordinances, by pronouncing the word '*Om*'. 24

The various kinds of sacrifices, *tapa* and alms-giving are done by those desiring salvation, by pronouncing '*tat*', without aiming at the result. 25

'*Sat*' is used in the sense of 'being' and 'good'; likewise, O Partha, the word '*sat*' is used in the sense of 'preferable' in ceremonies. 26

Steadfastness in sacrifice, *tapa* and alms-giving is also called '*sat*'. Anything done for

25. '*Om*' means the proclamation of the existence of God. '*Tat*' means that from whom all have sprung. And '*sat*' means God who is goodness. The *Brahmanas*, *Vedas* and the *Yajnas* are the amplifications of the ideas contained in these three words. Hence, they are the cause of the creation of these.

26. Sacrifice, alms-giving and *tapa* comprised the main religious ceremonies of the Hindus and every one of them was begun by pronouncing the word '*om*', that is, proclaiming or affirming the existence of God.

'tat', that is God, and the determination to do it is also called 'sat'. 27

Anything that is offered, given, practised as *tapa*, or done without faith, is called 'not<sup>2</sup> sat', O Partha, that is of no account, either here or hereafter. 28.

*Thus. . . . . Shraddhatraya Bibhaga Yoga.*

27. Those very good actions when done without faith cease to be good and become bad. Alms-giving, sacrifices and *tapa*, however done, have their physical effect but the psychological effect on the mind is considerably modified by the mental attitude of the performer. If he believes in the *Vedas* and in God, the performances give him satisfaction and lasting peace. Without that faith it is all a sham, unsatisfactory in every respect.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### MOKSHA (LIBERATION)

Arjuna spoke :

I desire to know, O Mahabahu, the essence of renunciation<sup>1</sup> of work as distinct from that of relinquishment<sup>2</sup> of the result of work, O Hrishikesha, O Keshinishudana. 1

The Holy One spoke :

Sages have known the giving up of all work<sup>3</sup> done with a desire as renunciation; the giving up of the fruit of all kinds of actions is called relinquishment<sup>4</sup> by the wise. 2

Some<sup>5</sup> thinkers have declared that action should be given up because it is evil; others<sup>6</sup> say that acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be relinquished. 3

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1. This is *karma-sannyasa*, the doctrine of *Sankhya*.

2. This is *karma yoga*, the special doctrine of the *Geeta*.

3. The *yajnas* or sacrifices.

4. The *Sankhya* prohibits the *yajnas*. The *Geeta* does not, but warns that it ought not to be done with the object of gain.

5. The mendicants or the *sannyasins*, as we see them to-day, are the followers of this doctrine.

6. With this school the *Geeta* agrees.

O Bharatasattama,<sup>7</sup> hear My sure conclusions as to that relinquishment, since, O Purushavyaghra,<sup>8</sup> relinquishment has been properly declared to be of three kinds.<sup>9</sup> 4

Acts of sacrifice, gift and austerity should not be relinquished but performed; sacrifice, gift and austerity purify the thoughtful.<sup>10</sup> 5

But even these actions should be done giving up attachment<sup>11</sup> and the fruit; that, O Partha, is My certain and best belief. 6

Verily, the giving up of the prescribed actions is not proper.<sup>12</sup> Their relinquishment out of ignorance<sup>13</sup> is declared to be *tamasa*. 7

Deeming as painful, he who giveth up an action from fear of bodily suffering, performeth a *rajasa* relinquishment, deriveth not the fruit of that relinquishment.<sup>14</sup> 8

7. The best of the *Bharatas*.

8. The tiger of man.

9. Krishna now enters into the science of relinquishment—its classification.

10. The effect is psychological and not physical, and hence fails if the full significance is not mentally realized, which, evidently, the light thinkers cannot do.

11. The spirit of bargaining must be banned.

12. It is a question of propriety and an essential part of religion.

13. Ignorance is always due to the preponderance of matter over mind.

14. The real sacrifice is the sacrifice of matter by mind, of material gain as a result of rational conduct. When the sacrifice is irrational, the effect is only physical and fails to obtain the psychological result.



When a prescribed action is performed because it ought<sup>15</sup> to be done, O Arjuna, giving up attachment and fruit, that relinquishment is deemed *sattwika*. 9

The relinquisher, enveloped in *sattwa*, intelligent, bereft of doubt, hateth not difficult work, nor is attached to the easy.<sup>16</sup> 10

Nor indeed can beings endowed with bodies completely give up actions.<sup>17</sup> Verily, he who gives up the fruit of action, is called a relinquisher. 11

For the non-relinquisher, the fruit of action hereafter is of three kinds—good, bad or mixed; but none for the relinquisher.<sup>18</sup> 12

O Mahabahu, learn from Me that as declared in the *Sankhya* system, there are five causes for the accomplishment of all actions. 13

The body, the doer, the various organs and diverse activities, the fifth being *daiva*.<sup>19</sup> 14

15. Done from a sense of duty which, however, is not the categorical imperative of Kant, but a rational act, due to the preponderance of mind over matter.

16. When *sattwa* prevails, understanding comes, doubt disappears and the question of difficulty or ease does not arise.

17. Even if a man has not to earn a living and is fed and clothed by others, he has yet to do some work in order to live.

18. The relinquisher having given up the fruit of action is not affected by the character of the fruit.

19. The first four causes come under *Prakriti* and are predictable but the fifth, *daiva* is unpredictable and is in the hands of the gods. Therefore, when a man having planned an action and doing it gets a result and congratulates himself on his success, he is leaving out the

Whatever a man doeth by his body, mind and speech, whether right or the reverse, these five are their causes. 15

That being so, the ignorant who regards the pure self as the actor<sup>20</sup> does not see aright because of his imperfect reason. 16

He who has transcended the ego<sup>21</sup>-sense and whose mind is not<sup>22</sup> affected, doth neither slay, nor is bound, even though he may kill the whole world of living beings. 17

Knowledge, the thing to be known and the knower are the three kinds of incentives<sup>23</sup> to action. The means, the work and the doer are the three constituents<sup>24</sup> of action. 18

According to *Sankhya*, knowledge, the act and the agent are of three kinds depending on

fifth cause, *daiva*, popularly called luck. Man is too short-sighted to take into account the remote causes. His knowledge extends only to the immediate causes.

20. Follows necessarily from above. The man is unaware of the operation of the fifth cause and is imperfect in his reasoning.

21. The egoistical takes the whole credit for the result of his action.

22. Not affected, that is not attached. The unegoistical and the unattached man has no axe to grind. The interest of all becomes his interest. He has no personal bonds, and if, for the universal interest, he has to kill a man, it is not he that is the real slayer.

23. Before a man can act, he has to plan it. In this there are three factors to reckon with. First, there is the actor, or knower, second, there is the result aimed at, the thing to be known, and third, there is the technique, the knowledge, how ~~to~~ is to be done.

24. After the planning when the work is actually done, the knower becomes the actor, the knowledge, the means and the thing to be known, the work. These are the constituents of the action. #

the difference in the qualities. Hear thou these  
duly also. 19

That by which oneness<sup>25</sup> is perceived in all  
things, inseparate<sup>26</sup> in the separate, know thou  
that knowledge as *sattwika*. 20

But that<sup>27</sup> knowledge that perceiveth by  
their differences the several manifold existences  
in all things, know that knowledge as *rajasa*, 21

while that<sup>28</sup> which unreasonably and without  
understanding the reality, clingeth to each  
individual thing as if it were all, being narrow,  
is called *tamasa*. 22

That action which is ordained, done by one<sup>29</sup>  
undesirous of fruit, devoid of attachment, without  
love or hate, is called *sattwika*. 23

But that action, done by one<sup>30</sup> desirous of  
result, or gain with egoism and much effort, is  
called *rajasa*. 24

That action, begun<sup>31</sup> under delusion, dis-  
regarding one's ability and consequences, loss and  
injury to others, is called *tamasa*. 25

25. The broadening process of the mind by which self-  
interest comes gradually to be universal interest.

26. The same idea as in 25. The idea of separateness  
arises from *maya*, the process of creation, which makes  
many out of one.

To be liberated is to transcend *maya*, to see things  
in their true perspective, to see in everything its root  
cause, God.

27. The analytic knowledge which concentrates attention  
on differences and misses the underlying unity.

28. The superficial that goes by outward appearances.

29, 30 & 31. These three actions may be compared to  
the actions of the experienced good man, of the impetuous  
youth and of the child.

That actor,<sup>32</sup> unattached, unegoistic, endued with patience and zeal, unaffected by success or failure, is called *sattwika*. 26

That actor,<sup>33</sup> passionate, desirous of fruits of action, greedy, envious, impure, subject to joy and sorrow, is called *rajasa*. 27

That actor<sup>34</sup> who is careless, conscienceless, impolite, deceitful, insulting, indolent, desponding and procrastinating, is called *tamasa*. 28

The three-fold division of reason and patience<sup>36</sup> according to the qualities, hear thou related separately and completely, O Dhananjaya. 29

That reason which can discriminate between inclination<sup>36</sup> and disinclination,<sup>37</sup> right<sup>38</sup> work and wrong,<sup>39</sup> safety<sup>40</sup> and danger,<sup>41</sup> and liberation<sup>42</sup> and bondage,<sup>43</sup> is *sattwika*, O Partha, 30

32, 33 & 34. The actors are fitted to the actions.

35. Patience here is to be understood in the sense of that quality of the mind that holds together and operates against the disruptive forces.

36 & 37. The moral propensities for good work and against bad work.

38 & 39. Duty and not-duty.

40 & 41. That ought not to be feared and what ought to be feared.

42 & 43. Liberation from the tyranny of matter and subservience to it. Liberation from foreign yoke is by wrong argument made to appear as freedom. To consider the people of one country as foreign to those of another is the initial mistake. We are all people of one country. The racial differences in characters are not disputed any more than the differences in the character of the individuals populating a country. Individuals belonging to the same country and race had in the past and will in the future tyrannise over each other, according to opportunity, so long as the mind is not freed from the bondage of matter. The real reason why one man, or race or people tyrannises

That reason<sup>44</sup> by which irreligion and religion are made to appear wrongly, as well as, wrong action and right action, is *rajasi*, O Partha. 81

That reason,<sup>45</sup> steeped in ignorance, which considers irreligion as religion and everything topsy-turvy, is *tamasi*, O Partha. 82

That patience by which through undeviating *yoga*, the work of mind, soul and the senses are steadied,<sup>46</sup> is *sattwiki*, O Partha. 83

That patience by which<sup>47</sup> religion, wealth and desires are held and by which attachment becomes desirous of fruit, is *rajasi*, O Partha. 84

over another, is that each wants to excel the other in material prosperity. This addiction to the material blinds us to the mind in us which alone can know, feel and will. The quality and measure of the material vary in us but the quality of the mind in all of us is the same, though the measure differs.

Understanding or sympathy is only possible through the common factors, feeling, knowing and willing, as summed up in the mind, not only between one man and another but between man and God, the mind of all minds. Gunpowder killed chivalry and the aeroplane is going to kill patriotism. But after death their souls will transmigrate and appear in new garbs, the first as the organised protection for the materially weak and the second, as the patriotism for the kingdom of God. Then will the old order change to new and God fulfil Himself in many ways. Call that patriotism 'Moral Rearmament', if you will, but remember, that the object of that Rearmament is not material prosperity but spiritual uplift.

44. The reason that misconceives both religion and morality.

45. The reason that mistakes irreligion for religion and morality for immorality.

46. Like a flame screened from draught, *yoga* has the effect of steadying the mind, soul and the senses by screening them from the currents of passion.

47. By this kind of patience religion is associated with the desire to acquire wealth.

That patience which from stupidity does not abandon<sup>49</sup> sleep, fear, grief, despair and also vanity, is *tamasi*. 85

Now, O Bharatarshava, hear thou from Me the three kinds of happiness. That in which one rejoiceth<sup>49</sup> by practice and which putteth an end to pain; 86

which at first is like poison but is like nectar in the end, born of the blissful knowledge of self,<sup>50</sup> is declared to be *sattwika* happiness.<sup>51</sup> 87

That which arising from the linking of the sense-objects with the senses is at first like nectar and poison-like in the end, is accounted *rajasa*.<sup>52</sup> 88

That which benumbs the soul in the beginning and in the end and arises from sleep, idleness and delusion, is declared *tamasa*.<sup>53</sup> 89

48. The ass-like obstinacy that sticks to inaction.

49. Which is improved by acquaintance.

50. The senses cannot give us happiness. It is only the realization of the nature of mind or self that can give us real happiness.

51 & 52. What has here been said of the *sattwika* and *rajasa* happiness may with equal propriety be said of sin and virtue. Sin, like borrowed capital, first gives you the pleasure of spending it but afterwards has to be paid for with interest. Virtue, like hard-earned money, gives you honest protection in the future. In nature, borrowing is impossible. Lending and borrowing are man-made institutions and the source of a great many crimes on earth including unjust wars. It is often very difficult to say whether a particular act is virtuous or sinful, but if this criterion is applied judgement becomes easy. Anything that gives you pleasure first and pain afterwards is sinful and anything which gives you pain first and happiness afterwards, is virtuous, speaking generally.

53. The *tamasa* happiness is of the intoxicating and soporific kind.

There exists naught either on earth or again in heaven in the *devas*, which is free from the nature-born three qualities.<sup>54</sup> 40

The duties of the *Brahmanas*, *Kshattriyas*, *Vaishyas* and *Shudras* have been classified according to the qualities prevailing in their nature.<sup>55</sup> 41

Restraint of mind, restraint of the senses, austerity, purity, forgiveness, uprightness, synthetic and analytic knowledge and belief in God are the inborn nature of the *Brahmanas*.<sup>56</sup> 42

Valour, energy, patience, dexterity, and not to turn back from battle, generosity, kingly virtues, are the inborn nature of the *Kshattriyas*.<sup>57</sup> 43

Agriculture, tending of kine and trade are the inborn work of the *Vaishyas*. Personal service is the inborn work of the *Shudras*.<sup>58</sup> 44

54. Everything which is an emulsion of mind and matter, in whatever varying proportion it may be, as in the lower beings, man and the heavenly beings, so long as it is made up of both mind and matter, it must necessarily show the three qualities, according as mind or matter gets the ascendancy or remains balanced.

55. The tendency of society towards stratification is as natural as the stratification of the rocks, based as both are on constitutional differences. The distinctions are fundamental.

56. People who are by nature fit to do all these works must have a preponderance of mind over matter.

57. Mind and matter must be fairly well-balanced in order to fit a man for all these. The North European races are like that and that is the reason why the greatest portion of the earth is now under their rule.

58. People naturally fit for business are the *Vaishyas*. The *Shudras* are people who cannot do anything else but personal service.

Each man intent on his own special work reacheth perfection.<sup>59</sup> Hear thou how by being intent on one's own work perfection is won. 45

He from whom all beings derive the urge, by whom all this is pervaded, worshipping Him by his own work a man reacheth perfection.<sup>60</sup> 46

Better one's own work properly done, even though unmeritorious, than work belonging to others. Doing the work ordained by one's nature, he incurreth no sin.<sup>61</sup> 47

O Kaunteya, work, congenial, even though defective, ought not to be abandoned. All undertakings are covered by drawbacks, as fire is by smoke.<sup>62</sup> 48

He whose thoughts are nowhere attached, self-governed, past all desires, attains by means of

59. It is altogether a new view-point of which we find nothing in modern sociology. There is no suggestion of equal opportunities for all or equal wealth. The truth is recognized here that for people not born equal, equality of wealth or social position is impossible. People who recklessly exploit the sentimental possibilities of race equality are responsible in no small degree for the present unrest of the world. Better if they tried to teach everybody to take pride in his work and specialise. That would be his perfection.

60. This also is a new conception of worship. By doing the work for which God has made each of us fit, we worship God. And it is by worshipping Him that we reach perfection.

61. That is the oft-quoted psalm of life. It is what may bring peace on earth. Do not envy others. Be satisfied with the work for which nature fitted you and God meant you. There is no sin in that, but on the contrary, that is what is really meritorious and not what merely appears as such.

62. Wealth has its responsibilities and drawbacks. If you are paid less, you have also less responsibilities.



renunciation, the highest perfection of freedom from action.<sup>63</sup>

49

O Kaunteya, learn from Me, merely briefly, how one who has attained perfection, attains to the Supreme Being which is the highest state of spiritual knowledge.

50

With purified reason, controlling himself with patience, having abandoned sound and other, objects of the senses, having laid aside anger envy,

51

dwelling in solitude pure, eating little, having subdued his speech, body and mind, intent on the *yoga* of meditation, always in a dispassionate state,

52

setting aside egoism, violence, arrogance, desire, anger, covetousness, becoming selfless and peaceful, he becomes fit for the state of *Brahma*.<sup>64</sup>

53

63. Such an attitude is only possible if you can learn to work from a sense of duty, unmindful of your personal loss or gain.

64. The material mould into which your mind is cast at birth is a cast-iron frame, rigid and unalterable during lifetime, following the material law of inheritance, on which the caste distinctions have been founded. It has absolute jurisdiction over your material ability to do work. But your mind which only has the power to feel, know and will, is independent of time and space and hence of the body. It is tied to the body by choice and not by necessity. Your own desires tie you to it. Stone walls do not a prison make; the mind is in its own place, what matter where? Though our body is forced to work on the physical plane, our mind can soar high. The high ideal set forth here is attainable, or at least strivable with varying degrees of success, according to the measure of our mind, the

Becoming *Brahma*, serene in mind, he regrets naught and wants naught. Same to all beings, he becomes supremely devoted to Me.<sup>65</sup> 54

By his devotion he comes to know Me in reality,<sup>66</sup> how much and who I am. Knowing Me thus in reality, he then enters into Me.<sup>67</sup> 55

Ever performing all actions, taking refuge<sup>68</sup> in Me, by My grace he obtains My eternal indestructible abode. 56.

Renouncing all actions in Me by thy mind,<sup>69</sup> intent on Me, resorting to the *yoga* of reason, have thy thought<sup>70</sup> always on Me. 57

Fixing thy mind on Me, thou shalt overcome all difficulties by My grace. But if from egoism thou wilt not listen, thou shalt be destroyed. 58

quality of mind in all being equal. Your caste, or cast, is no bar against the attainment of this ideal. True fraternity and equality are based on the equal quality of the mind.

65. Once you have acknowledged this equality and fraternity, the whole universe becomes wonderfully akin to you. You suffer with everybody's suffering and enjoy with everybody's happiness. Till you have done so, you are in no true sense devoted to God.

66. To be able to comprehend truly the nature of mind is to know the universality of the mind, its scope and nature.

67. And to do so is to enter the kingdom of God.

68. All work, as we know it, being the result of the joint efforts of matter and mind, necessarily partake of some of the imperfections of matter. But if the mind is well aware of its own invulnerability, the imperfections slide off like water on duck's back.

69. Mentally shaking off.

70. Mind naught but the mind.

If taking to egoism thou thinkest of not fighting, thy attempt will be in vain; nature will prevail.<sup>71</sup> 59

O Kaunteya, bound by thine own work, nature-born, if from delusion thou desirest not to do it, thou shalt be obliged to do it.<sup>72</sup> 60

O Arjuna, God resides in the heart<sup>73</sup> of all created beings, making all created beings revolve, like on a machine,<sup>74</sup> by His creative<sup>75</sup> power. 61

O Bharata, seek refuge in Him by all means. By His grace thou shalt reach the everlasting place, the supreme peace.<sup>76</sup> 62

Thus has the knowledge, the secret<sup>77</sup> of secrets, been declared to thee by Me. Having fully considered it, do as thou likest. 63

71 & 72. Fight you must, nature compels you to fight. Life is a continuous struggle or fight, either passive or active. But the fight is between mind and matter. Our life, an intimate mixture or emulsion of these, is maintained by a continuous agitation of these two, otherwise they will part company and settle down to their respective spheres, like water and oil. This separation of mind from matter is real death.

73. Though the mind has the power to know and will as well as feel, the emphasis here is laid on the feeling, because it is the feeling that enables us to understand others and sympathise.

74. This is the most clear declaration that the material part of creation is entirely mechanistic.

75. But *Prakriti* who presides over the machine is herself God's creation. This is the fundamental difference between the *Sankhya* and the *Geeta*.

76. The supreme peace is not possible without God's grace.

77. That, no doubt, is a great secret but it is not the highest, which is revealed in the 66th sloka.

Again, do thou listen to My supreme word, the most<sup>78</sup> secret. Thou art extremely dear to Me, therefore I shall declare unto thee for thy benefit. 64

Be intent on Me, be My devotee, My worshipper and do obeisance to Me.<sup>79</sup> Thus shalt thou reach Me, I promise thee truthfully. Thou art dear to Me. 65

Forsaking all considerations<sup>80</sup> of duty, do thou seek refuge in Me alone. Do not mourn. I shall save thee from all sins.<sup>81</sup> 66

Do thou not ever tell this to the irreligious, nor to the faithless, nor to unwilling listeners, nor to My slanderers.<sup>82</sup> 67

He who tells this supreme secret to My devotees, doing the supreme devotion to Me, undoubtedly shall come to Me.<sup>83</sup> 68

Than he there exists among men none who performeth dearer service to Me, nor will there be any dearer to Me than he.<sup>84</sup> 69

78. For it is the climax and conclusion.

79. It is the complete and unqualified surrender of matter to mind.

80 & 81. If you can absolutely surrender to God, your sins of omission and commission with respect to the forms of religion will be scored off.

82. You can never teach unless your pupil wants to learn. The psychological necessity of this valuable prohibition being ignored by the zeal of some clergymen, religion has been brought to irreverence. Like medicine, religion, if administered to any one who is not in need of it, will act as poison. It is only meant for the distressed soul who wants it and sends out the S.O.S.

83. But blessed is the preacher who preaches it to the faithful devotee.

84. The right preacher is the dearest to God.

He who will read this sacred account of ours, will be worshipping Me by the sacrifice<sup>85</sup> of knowledge. That is My opinion. 70

That man also, faithful, unreviling, from the mere hearing<sup>86</sup> of it will be freed and reach the happy domain of the sacred performers.<sup>87</sup> 71

O Partha, hath this been heard by thee with concentrated attention? O Dhananjaya, hath thy ignorant delusion been destroyed? 72

Arjuna spoke :

Gone is my delusion, regained is my memory<sup>88</sup> by me through Thy grace, O Achyuta. I am established<sup>89</sup>, past doubt. I shall do as Thou biddest me. 73

Sanjaya spoke :

This marvellous and horrifying<sup>90</sup> account of Mahatma Vasudeva and Partha I heard. 74

Through the grace of Vyasa<sup>91</sup> I could hear this supreme secret spoken by the Lord of *yoga*, Shree Krishna Himself. 75

85. *Jnan-yajna*.

86. For one who has faith, the mere hearing gives salvation.

87. Virtuous men.

88. According to Freud, we are all more or less insane when we make mistakes which are due to some kind of loss of memory. That the soul is a part of God is what the soul forgets when it is dissociated from God at birth. Suggestions that revive the memory of the connection revive the connection.

89. Stabilized.

90. Hair-raising.

91. The reference is to the gift of television and telephony that was made by Vyasa to Sanjaya at the beginning of

O King, recalling again and again this marvellous sacred account of Keshava and Arjuna, I am horrified every now and then. . 76.

Great is my wonder, O King, recalling again and again that marvellous form of Hari. I am so horrified again and again. 77

Where the Lord of *yoga*, Krishna, is, where archer Partha is, there must be eternal fortune, victory, progress and righteousness. That is my conviction.<sup>92</sup> 78

*Thus ends . . . . . Moksha Yoga.*

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the battle, so that Sanjaya might see and hear what happened at the distant battle-field of Kurukshetra while sitting at Hastinapur and relate it to the blind king Dhritarashtra.

92. The sense is that human effort can never succeed unless it is on the side of God. There may be partial and temporary success but for lasting success it must have the blessings of God. Those who believe in human efforts alone will be disappointed. The real meaning is that for the success of world work, both mind and matter must co-operate, the mind leading and matter following.

## CONCLUSION

THERE are five conclusions to the Geeta arrived at by the five *dramatis personae*. The first is a blind king who wants to know what happens at the distant battle-field because he is interested. He initiates the debate and does nothing but listen to it. We begin the world blindly with our material bodily interests but are gradually led to questions regarding the immaterial mind.

The second is Sanjaya, the mouth-piece. The conclusion that he reaches is that for victory, fortune and goodness to continue for ever, the powers of man must be in league with those of God.

The third is Duryyodhana, the personification of *raja-guna*. He is a firm believer in brute force and careful planning. He proudly and complacently recounts his superior forces. The conclusion that he reaches is that all that is necessary for success is to make the army aware of the weak points which must be guarded against.

The fourth is Arjuna, valour personified, who in a weak moment succumbs to the seductions of contemplation and renunciation, which may be all right for the recluse but are very unworthy of the soldier who is pledged to defend his

country against unjust aggression. He argues a long time but in the end has the good sense to see that he had better be guided by the opinion of one who has been his friend, philosopher and guide all along and whom for the first time Arjuna realises as the personification of the Divine wisdom. What reasoning could not do, faith did. The conclusion that he reaches is that his mind is purged of obsession and he determines to follow his informed faith.

The fifth, Shree Krishna (the latent God, made patent), comes directly to the point without losing any time on the setting of the stage. The soul is immortal, the body is mortal. Therefore, we should not be attached to the body. The soul as a free agent is the master of the situation, not the bond-slave of matter, as some seem to think, yet it requires to co-operate with the body for world work. Therefore, we should train it and keep it under control, which requires a constant fight. *Fight, fight, fight.* That is the burden of his song, but it is a fight between mind and matter, carried forward to a fight between the materially-minded man and the spiritually-minded man. And as a convincing proof of his argument, he goes through all the then known schools of philosophy and religion. But even they do not suffice. Finally, a small gap is left which has to be crossed through faith. Therefore, his conclusion is "leave all philosophy, all ethics, all religion and take my shelter. I shall save thee."



That little gap left by philosophy, ethics, religion and also science has, like Euclid's fifth proposition been the most difficult crossing for most beginners. A little imagination is required to cross this bridge, which all of us do not possess. We are required to have that unswerving faith which enables us to believe that God can take an elephant through a needle's eye and make two and two equal five. Are these beliefs, after all, such impossibilities? They need not be such impossibilities as we are apt to make them. They are, in a way, every-day truths. Why does water contravene the law of Nature at 4 degrees centigrade?<sup>1</sup> There is no answer to the question beyond the recognition of the fact. It is little use our saying that that is its nature. Why can we not believe that it is God's nature to create Nature? Though we cannot give a reason for the uncommon behaviour of water, we can appreciate with thankfulness its significance to us. But for it, the aquatic life under the seas would have long been frozen to death. Does not God make the elephant pass through the needle's eye when he makes it alter generation?<sup>2</sup> The genes that carry it would easily pass through the needle's eye. And how is it that the usual process of cell-division is suspended at maturity? Why do one and one instead of making two make one in

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1. The usual law of contracting with loss of heat is reversed at 4 °C.

2. All living beings have an alternate vegetative and sporific existence or a gametic and zygotic existence. The sporific and gametic are usually invisible to the naked eye and were only lately discovered after the microscope came into use.

the fusion of the gametes?<sup>3</sup> We see that the whole machinery of heredity would fail, if following the ordinary law, one and one were allowed to make two instead of one. We assign a reason for the exception, discover a purpose in it, yet are afraid to go beyond mechanism, mostly because the agent behind the purpose is invisible. Science has to-day familiarised us with a host of invisible agencies that can do visible work. The exceptions to the natural laws are most illuminating, *e.g.*, a velocity of 100,000 added to a velocity of 100,000 miles per second does not exceed 186,000 miles per second.

Biology can no longer be explained by mechanism alone. There is a general agreement that in some way not explicable, organisms transcend mechanism. The dim analogue of mind is seen in the protozoa and mind is conterminous with life itself. The mind is 'thirled' to the body and the body is thrilled by the mind. That the mind does influence the body is a certainty of experience. It is also certain that beings with organs do not spontaneously generate. Science no longer disputes the existence of mind but has no clear conception of it. Einstein by defining matter has demarcated mind.\* Energy congealed by the space-time limitations is matter. Mind has no such limitations. Galileo referred to the difference between mind and matter

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3. In the vegetative cell-division, each cell duplicates itself and becomes two. When the vegetative or zygotic cells divide into gametic, they are split up into halves, but are again united into one after the sexual union.

\* See General Introduction p. 9 l. 18.

when he pointed out the differences between the quantitative and qualitative features of the world. He called the quantitatives real because they were independent of mind. Science by accepting his classification has confined itself to the quantitative features of the world. But there is no reason to suppose that what science neglects is less real than what it accepts.

The qualitative differences are due to the interaction of mind with matter for, as Galileo said, the senses were their escort. In the absence of the senses, according to Galileo, they did not exist. But philosophers do not agree with him there. The quantitatives are as much due to matter as the qualitatives and the sensing of both requires the intervention of mind. A moving shadow as a shadow is real, though it cannot be weighed, nor is it palpable. Though Galileo was wrong in not calling both real, he was right in pointing out the role of mind. Certain things inhere in matter but they cannot be sensed without mind. Mind alone has the power of sensing. Whether mind can exist without matter, and matter without mind, are questions that cannot be tested by experimental proofs. Here we have to depend on inference and belief.

In the last analysis, the 25 categories of Kapila become reduced to three, *viz.*, time, space and energy. By using the conventional signs used in Mendelism, we get the following:—

Energy = *Ets*, that is energy independent of time and space.

Time=Tes, that is, time independent of space and energy.

Space=Set, that is, space independent of time and energy.

For the sake of simplicity we will omit the small letters\* for the present. In the physical universe space and time are linked but the link has only been recently discovered. The mind has no difficulty in conceiving space apart from time. The idea of time is built up on the idea of change. Any thing that does not change we call eternal. Since we can conceive a point that has position but not space, we can also imagine something which does not change but yet is in space. The three things, time, space and energy, or T, S, and E taken two at a time give us the following combinations:—

T-S or the space-time continuum.

E-T or energy linked to time but not to space.

E-S or energy linked to space but not to time.

T-S has got no energy of its own but is merely a form, a rigid one, which once entered into by energy, has to be obeyed as the cast iron physical law, if not completely, at least very nearly so. It would appear that the *Prakriti* of Kapila is very likely this time-space continuum and his *Purusha* is energy. It must be acknowledged that energy combined with space-time give us the phenomenal world which is represented by ET-S.

Let us now turn our attention to E-T. It is energy linked to time but not to space. Not

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\* The small letter represents the factor for the absence of what is represented by the capital letter.

being in space, it has no independent existence and being linked to time, it is not eternal, that is, perishable. It is the vital principle that can release the stored up energy in matter. Its existence was predicted by the fond hope of the physicist to drive a ship across the Atlantic with the energy liberated from a thimbleful of mud. It is this vital principle that liberates the energy stored up in our food. Assimilation is impossible by chemical means alone. Chemistry and physics deal with ET-S, that is, congealed energy. Biology deals with ET-S and E-T, combined. Living beings originated with this combination.

But the picture of living beings is not complete without the feelings which are functions of the soul. For that we must turn to the combination E-S. It is energy in space but not in time, that is, immortal. All its energy is confined to feeling, knowing and willing. It has, therefore, to depend on E-T or the vital force to carry on its work with the help of ET-S or matter. Living beings are combinations of ET-S, E-T and E-S, that is, matter, life and soul. The idea of the soul, as conceived by the Geeta, feeling, knowing and willing but not actively participating either with matter or the vital principle, becomes quite intelligible now. We give below the full representation :—

Energy = E.

Time = T.

Space = S.

Time-Space = T-S.

Energy-Time, or the vital principle=E-T.

Energy-Space, or the soul=E-S.

Matter or energy congealed=ET-S.

It is the subject matter of physics and chemistry.

Matter in combination with the vital energy  
=ET-S.E-T.

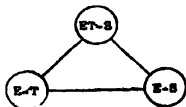
It is the subject matter of biology.

Living beings=ET-S.E-T.E-S.

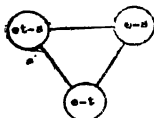
It is the subject matter of religion.

Kapila's universe did not go further and the modern sciences do not go even so far, for they leave out the soul. But even Kapila's universe was not complete. The unification was not complete. It was left for the Geeta to put the coping-stone on the noble edifice. That coping-stone was the Supreme Purusha or Purushottama. All emanate from Him and all are re-absorbed in Him, that is, the universe can be made by Him either patent or latent. He alters generation when He passes from the one to the other. He has all the factors for presence and absence. Therefore, He is fully represented by ET-S.E-T.E-S.et-s.e-t.e-s. A good formal representation would be the following:—

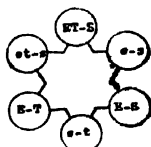
The patent or  
dominant form.



The latent or  
recessive form.



The complete  
form.



The patent form is as He expresses Himself to us, i.e., it is the form which we can understand,

because it accords with our nature. Of the latent form, we have only negative knowledge. His complete form which is a combination of these two is not fully knowable by us. From the complete form, both the latent form and the patent form can arise, and in it all contradictions find a solution.

Having confined the infinite within a formal formula, let us see in what relation we stand to Him. Our mind staggers when we think of the immense physical universe alone. It extends 2,000 million light years both ways. The age of the earth is about 2,000 million years, as computed by the clock of uranium degeneration into lead. Therefore, the distant-most stars as we see them to-day are the conditions in which the earth was when it was formed. Immense as this physical universe is, it is not, however, all, for it is fairly certain that there are other kinds of universes. What have we puny men on earth to do with the Creator or Master of these stupendous universes? Can He possibly care for us or listen to our prayers? Is it possible for Him to attend to us individually? Can He get out of His way to do it? All these questions the Geeta answers boldly by an unqualified 'yes'. If the universes are immense, their creator is *immenser*. The indestructible soul that each one of us possesses, is a fragment of the Supreme Soul that deputises for Him. All reference to God by us is a reference to it. The realization of God is the realization of the immense possibilities of the soul. It is cramped in most of us by the pressure

of the outer shell of matter. The great variation that we find between one man and another is due to the difference in the outer shell of matter. The inner core in all of us is of the same essence, though not in the same condition. Feelings are due to the soul and that is why the rich and the poor, the intelligent and the dull have a variety of feelings in common. Feeling is the bond that unites us all and forms the basis of true equality. It is what unites us to God. The soul can vibrate in unison with God, provided it is not cramped by the pressure of the outer shell of matter. When the soul develops its full stature, the outer shell is thinned almost to nothingness. It is then and only then, that we realize that all men are really equal in the core and only the outside is different. If it pains me to be deprived of the means of livelihood, to be insulted, to be deprived of freedom, it must pain others too under similar treatment. That is an equality, a fraternity and a justice that is the basis of all understanding between man and man. The differences in the material body stand against the realization of this equality. That realization is worth fighting and dying for. "*Fight, fight, fight*" must be the burden of our song, as in the Geeta. In the words of the Geeta, we must tell all that "your nature will force you to fight, even though you may not want to," and till that fight is over, the armament race must go on. Till that fight is over there can be no peace, for that was the world work that we were commissioned to do when God separated us from



Himself. He put space between us and Himself. Our salvation is to overcome that barrier. Gunpowder killed chivalry and the aeroplane is going to kill patriotism, and thereby the space between one country and another. Only after that event will the kingdom of earth be the kingdom of God.

We have to acknowledge the existence of three distinct forms of energy, not mutually convertible except with the help of the Creator. The first is the material energy with which physics deals. The second is the vital energy which alone possesses the power to slowly release the locked up energy in congealed matter. This releasing is a very slow process. The first breaking down is done by the unicellular organisms which manufacture the various compounds which feed the plants. Animals feed on them and man on both of them. There is a wonderful agency that prevents the lapse of organic matter into the inorganic. The bodies of living beings are utilized to feed life, as if the slowly released energy from congealed energy must be conserved to the utmost. It is significant that though chemistry has been able to manufacture organic compounds from inorganic, these manufactured organic compounds cannot sustain life, because they are wanting in vitamins. For whose benefit is this ceaseless endeavour to conserve life? Is it purposeful or purposeless? Ostensibly at least, it seems to administer to the wants of man. And the wants of man are the feelings. We may call physics the raw material, biology, the industry and the soul, the consumer or enjoyer. These three correspond to the three

*gunas, tama, raja and sattwa*. All these are present in all living beings and subject them to three different impacts, as between raw material, industry and consumer. Matter and soul are immiscible like water and oil and are kept in a state of emulsion by the agitation of the vital principle. The absence of it causes the stasis, known as death.

Evolution proceeds, not by gradients, but by steps. The physical laws can give us gradients but not steps. The steps reveal a mind that plans them. If we discover steps in a freshly discovered land, we infer that other men have been there before us to build them. That we do not see the men is no proof of their non-existence. Every argument that has been put forward to prove the existence of an evolutionary process is an argument for the existence of a purposive mind behind it. As the latest in the evolutionary process we, men, represent the mind. That man was made in the image of God is a fact. Call it anthropomorphism, if you like, but the fact cannot be disputed. May be, the image represents not the body but the soul. We can know God to the extent our mind resembles His, and misunderstand Him to the extent our mind differs from His.

Men exhibit great variation in this similarity to God, due to the variation in the development of the soul. Revelation depends on this similarity. Revelation is distinct from reflection. It is the perception of truth without the intervention of the will and without the mixture of personality.

It is characterised by unbounded faith, vivifying and sanctifying and diffusing the soul with the sentiment of love. It has only a place in the silent understanding. Rationalization kills it. To be inspired is to suspend other faculties. Turn this into a habit and principle and you will soon arrive at the disdain of all other faculties of human nature. We then cease to care for the gross senses which hinder and obscure inspiration. The ecstasy of the ancients, the flight of the alone to the alone, the trance of the saints are facts of this kind. They seem to depend on the power to exclude the body from the mind. In them, *truths related to mind and not to matter* are realized. Such truths are eternal, because the time factor is absent from them. That is why, truths realized thousands of years ago by the seers of the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads*, the *Sankhya*, the *Geeta* and by Buddha, Christ and Mahomet, continue still to affect our minds profoundly. The truths that they discovered, *so far as they did not relate to matter but to mind*, were eternal.

When Shree Krishha says that God is *sat* and *asat*, existing and non-existing, that He loves and loves not, that He is near and far, he seems to contradict himself, but what he really means is that the factors for space-time are patent when He is *sat* or existing, and that they are latent when He is *asat* or non-existing. The difference is as between T-S and t-s. He loves when the factors for feelings are patent and He loves not when they are latent. The difference

is as between E-S and e-s. If He did not possess this changing character, He would be no better than the machine-like matter, unable to will any change. Government would be impossible without this prerogative to will a change. That is the difference that distinguishes the Purushottama from either *Purusha* or energy, and *Prakriti* or nature. Will denotes the ability to change and man possesses this will to a limited degree and can, therefore, choose one of two alternatives. The strength of this will depends on the extent to which a man can change from the latent to the patent and vice versa.\* The concept of a simultaneous presence and absence is made possible by Mendelism. Presence and absence here mean their root causes. As possessing both these in the highest degree, there is no limit to God's will. Invariability is the negation of this will. To be convinced of this will of God is to have real faith. And our faiths are as we make them and we are as our faiths make us:—*sattwa*, *raja*, or *tama*; feeling, doing or inactive; enjoyer, worker or raw material; followers of God, Vital Principle or Materialism.

We make our faiths and our faiths make us. That is the vicious circle. It is as if each of us can look on others and the outside world only through a particularly tinted glass window, so that what we see is not the reality but a particular distortion of it. The matter is different when we look inside our own soul, discarding

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\* Psycho-analytically, it is a complicated process involving the Id, Ego and the Super-Ego.

all the knowledge that we got through the gross senses. The soul in all of us being of the same essence, we come to the knowledge that is undistorted. This knowledge is undistorted reality or revelation. It is the silent operation of the mind which can make the whole universe wonderfully akin. Through this operation we not only understand others but even plants and animals and realize God. God's machinery, *karmabandhan* (the bonds of action), does not yield to rationalization but to realization. It is proof to rationalization but has a loop-hole left for realization. The happy-go-lucky man takes the world at its face value and never suspects the existence of any loop-hole, till he receives a rude shock which shatters both his luck and his happiness. His unhappiness forces him to revise his faith and if he is diligent and fortunate, he does not recover his former happiness but something else, which is as different from his former happiness as is diamond from paste. It is the genuine article that comes from the discovery of his soul. It irradiates wisdom, health and peace, quite different from his lost happiness but infinitely better. That is liberation.

*ATMANA ATMANUM UDDHARET.*

LIBERATE THYSELF BY THY OWN SOUL.

OM TAT SAT. YES, THAT EXISTS.

THE END.



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